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PLUCK AND LUCK

DAVE AND THE DIAMOND
OR THE BOY WHO CAME FROM BRAZIL
AND OTHER STORIES

By Berton Bertrew



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Stories of Adventure

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Dave and the Diamond

OR,

THE BOY WHO CAME FROM BRAZIL

By BERTON BERTREW

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT THE BIG DIAMOND THAT WAS OFFERED TO DAVE.

Some years ago, before the tall skyscrapers began to go up in Maiden lane, New York, some of the diamond dealers, for which that street has so long been famous, used to have their places of business in small stores on the ground floor instead of upstairs in offices as now.

Mr. Israel Gompers, an elderly and much respected dealer in precious stones, was one of these.

Mr. Gompers at that time was widely known as a rare judge of gems and a man of strict integrity. He had furnished diamonds to some of the richest families in New York and yet to look at his place from the outside you would not think the man was worth ten cents.

It was just a little hole in the wall, a short, narrow store curiously dove-tailed in between two larger ones, and yet transactions amounting to many millions had been carried on there.

Mr. Gompers himself was a little dried-up old gentleman, with a harsh voice, but a kind heart and lots of cash to back it up.

He had two clerks, a boy of some eighteen years named David Hartwell, whom he had taken a fancy to and picked up out of the streets, so to speak, although the boy's parents, both of whom were now dead, had been perfectly respectable and had given their son a fairly good education, which was a great help to "Dave," as he was always called, now that he was left to shift for himself.

The second clerk was a young lady, who kept the accounts and wrote the letters—typewriters were not much in vogue in those days—and attended to the actresses when they called to buy or sell diamonds, for Mr. Gompers had a horror of women and would only deal with them through Miss Adele Bradford, who was both young and pretty and shrewd at the business, too.

In Mr. Gompers' establishment everything went like clock-work. Stolen goods were purchased sometimes, of course; it was impossible to avoid making mistakes, although Mr. Gompers was very particular and would never deal with any one he believed to be a professional crook.

On such occasions—we mean when complaint was made—

the books were always open to the police and Mr. Gompers ever ready to assist in recovering the diamonds, if sold, for their rightful owners.

Often he found himself seriously out of pocket by these transactions, as both Dave and Adele very well knew.

One afternoon in the month of May, just as Mr. Gompers was beginning to think about going home, the store door opened and a well-known actress entered, Miss Irene Duchenne by name, who, nodding to Adele, asked to be shown some unset diamonds, saying that she desired to match one which had recently been presented to her.

As Miss Duchenne had bought diamonds at the store before Adele hastened to show her such gems as were likely to meet her wants, and Mr. Gompers took his seat at his desk in the rear of the little store, which occupied a place alongside of a window overlooking a narrow courtyard.

Mr. Gompers was now ready to deal with the actress through his clerk, who would offer nothing without first submitting the diamond to him to have the price fixed.

He had hardly taken his seat when a handsomely-dressed gentleman entered with a number of small diamonds for sale.

This brought Mr. Gompers to the front, for he always did his own buying.

The diamonds were unset and in the usual blue papers. Mr. Gompers examined them, made a price, which was rejected, and then the bargaining began.

They were desirable stones, and the dealer advanced his offer; the gentleman held out for more, and they were still talking in low tones when the door opened a third time, and a boy entered, not much older than Dave, dressed in rough clothes and with a face so sunburned that Dave at once put him down for a sailor. He came timidly up to the counter, and asked: "Do you buy diamonds here?"

"Why, yes," replied Dave. "Have you got any to sell?"

"I have one," said the boy, speaking with a strong English accent. "I'd like to turn it into cash if I could."

Mr. Gompers, who never looked around, but who heard all and saw all, now gave Dave a sign, which meant:

"Look at the stone. If it is no good, send him away; if it is worth buying, hold him till I am through."

"Perhaps we can do business," replied Dave. "Let me see the diamond."

The boy put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a red

handkerchief, in which was wrapped a small pasteboard box, such as spool cotton comes in. This he laid on the counter, and, opening it, displayed the most remarkable thing in the way of a diamond that Dave had ever laid eyes on.

It was as big as a pigeon's egg and beautifully cut. It caught the rays of the setting sun, which shone through the window, reflecting them back from a thousand points.

Dave saw at a glance that it was a unique gem and worth a large sum of money, if a genuine stone without a flaw, as it certainly appeared to be.

"Where in the world did you get that?" asked Dave, in amazement.

"Oh, I've just come up from Brazil," replied the boy. "Only landed this afternoon. I was up in the diamond country a while. I got this from an Indian. I assure you it is all straight."

"But it has been cut," said Dave. "This diamond has been to Amsterdam; there is nowhere else in the world that such work can be done."

"I don't know anything about that," replied the boy. "I only know where I got it. My name is Gordon Winstanley. I came up from Brazil as a deck hand on the hide ship Anglo-Saxon. She is lying at Robert's stores, over in Brooklyn, now. If you don't believe me it is very easy to prove what I say."

"That's all right," replied Dave. "I didn't say that I did not believe you. What do you want for this stone?"

"Whatever it is worth."

"It's worth a good deal of money if it is straight goods. We don't buy these big stones as a rule. Wait a moment until Mr. Gompers can have a look at it. I would not undertake to make a price."

"May I have a look at the diamond?" asked Miss Duchenelle, turning away from Adele. "Oh, my, isn't it a big one, and such a beauty! May I touch it? Please let me. I'll be very careful."

"No!" said Mr. Gompers, shortly. "We don't allow it, miss. You may handle my diamonds, but not those belonging to other people."

"You are insulting, sir!" cried the actress, springing up in a huff. I am no thief!"

Mr. Gompers made no reply to this remark.

"Don't want them at your price," he said, pushing the blue paper toward the stranger, and then he stepped up alongside of Dave and proceeded to examine the big diamond in his usual business-like way.

He turned it over and over, put a glass on it for an instant, and then laid it back in the spool cotton box.

While he was thus engaged, Miss Duchenelle stood behind the boy from Brazil on the left, and the stranger, stepping up, stood on his right; both were regarding the big diamond with admiring eyes.

"Don't want it myself," said Mr. Gompers, decidedly; "it is a genuine stone and very valuable; worth too much money for me to take any chances on. I think I can place it for you, though, if it is straight."

"I'll give you ten thousand dollars for it," said the stranger, "cash down."

"I'll give twelve!" cried Miss Duchenelle. "Oh, it's a perfect darling. I'll give more if I can't get it for that."

"What do you mean by trying to do business in my store?" flashed Mr. Gompers. "Is dis an auction room? Who pays de rent here, you or I?"

Neither the stranger nor the actress answered, for at the same instant the boy from Brazil uttered a sharp cry.

"Look! Look! There he is! I've been followed! Oh, save me! Save me!" he shouted, pointing to the rear of the store.

He threw up his hands and fell to the floor all in a heap, twisting and turning and foaming at the mouth.

It was so sudden, so startling, that all involuntarily looked in the direction of the boy's pointing finger.

To Dave's astonishment—and every one else was equally startled—he saw that the window in the back of the store had been lowered at the top, and there, protruding over the sash, was the head of a man.

His face was dark and swarthy, with small, glittering eyes and an enormous nose.

For an instant only he surveyed the startled occupants of Mr. Gompers' store, and then, as the boy from Brazil fell writhing in the fit, the face suddenly disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

DAVE SEES THE FACE AGAIN.

In the excitement of the moment everybody in the store forgot the big diamond.

Dave was the first to recollect the rule of the house, which was never to take eyes off a valuable gem if there were people in the store.

He clapped the cover on the box and hastily put the box itself in the open safe.

"Dat's right, Dave," whispered Mr. Gompers. "Run into the court. See who it was. Follow him. Have him arrested. Quick!"

Dave needed no second order.

He had often called Mr. Gompers' attention to the insecurity of the place, for the window opened upon a narrow court, now wiped out of existence by the changes of modern times, but then having an entrance on Maiden lane and an exit through a hallway into John street. Thus, one could go right through the block by way of that court, if he knew the ropes.

Dave pounced out of the store, turned into the alley and ran through the court to John street, seeing nobody, nor was there anything to be seen of the peculiar-looking stranger when he got on the other street.

He inquired of one or two loungers at the windows of the jewelry stores if they had seen such a person come out of the hallway, which communicated with the court, but no one had.

Then Dave realized what a hopeless task he had undertaken and gave it up, returning to the store, where he found Mr. Gompers and Adele alone with the boy from Brazil, the actress and the stranger having departed, ordered out by Mr. Gompers. Adele whispered, as he went to the back of the store, where the old diamond dealer stood looking down at the sailor boy, who lay perfectly unconscious on the floor.

"Vell, did you see him?" demanded Mr. Gompers. "No, I read it in your face, Dave. He vas too quick for you—he vas gone."

"Yes, sir. I could find out nothing about him. I——"

"Bah! What's de use talking?" broke in Mr. Gompers, shrugging his shoulders. "It is not my peezeness—no. I have rung for an ambulance. Let them take de boy to de hospital. As for dat feller at de vinder, mebbe he vas a tramp, mebbe he vas following de boy. I cannot tell."

Just then the ambulance came rattling up to the door, and the young doctor, accompanied by the policeman whom Mr. Gompers had first called to his assistance, came hurrying in.

"It's a severe case of epilepsy," pronounced the doctor. "I'll take him to Chambers street. What's his name?"

"How should I know? Take him away. He brought a diamond here. I vill keep it safe for him till he calls for it. Officer, you make a record of dat."

"He told me his name was Gordon Winstanley and that he had just arrived from Brazil on the ship Anglo-Saxon," explained Dave.

This was written down, and Dave helped the doctor and the

policeman to put the unconscious boy into the ambulance, and he was driven away.

"This is a strange piece of business, sir," remarked Dave, after they had departed.

Mr. Gompers gave a peculiar grunt, which always meant that he was excited.

"Miss Bradford, you go home," he said. "Dave, glose de store."

Adele departed in a moment.

"Don't have anything to do with that diamond, Dave," she whispered, as she was leaving. "I don't know why I say so, but I feel as though it was sure to bring you trouble if you do."

"Pshaw! You are nervous, Adele!" laughed Dave, and he pushed the heavy steel shutter which protected the rear window into place and carefully fastened it.

"Dave, come here," said Mr. Gompers, after Adele withdrew.

He was pacing up and down the store, smoking the inevitable cigar.

"Yes, sir," replied Dave, hurrying forward.

"Dave," continued Mr. Gompers, "I am going home, but you have got work to do to-night. Did you know that?"

"I'm ready to do anything you want done, sir," replied Dave, promptly, "but I did not know it—no!"

"Listen to me, Dave. I have seen dat big diamond before. Do you know vat it is?"

"No, sir."

"Vell, I tell you. Dat is a diamond vat vonce belonged to the great Napoleon. It is called de Star of de Vest. It is valued at a hundred thousand dollars easy, mebbe more. I saw it in Amsterdam twenty years ago. It vas stolen from de King of Holland's jewel-cabinet some twelve years ago und de detectives have been looking for it ever since, for dere is a revard of twenty thousand dollars for de man who finds it. Dat's de history of dat stone."

Dave's eyes were big with astonishment. He had the most implicit confidence in Mr. Gompers' knowledge of diamonds. He never thought of such a thing as doubting the truth of what he had just heard.

"And do you propose to hold the stone, sir?" he asked.

"I don't know. It vas an unlucky stone, und I believe in unlucky stones. I could tell you more about it. Dere has been murders committed on account of dat stone, dere has been—but no matter now. First of all I must be sure. Dave, I vant you to take dat diamond up to de Hotel Brunswick und show it to my good friend Steenkamp, who has just come from Amsterdam. Tell him all. Ask him if it is really de famous Star of de Vest, but don't say a vord about vat I t'ink until he says so himself—you understand?"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Dat's all right. I cannot go. My niece is to be married to-night at eight o'clock from my house, and I am to give her away, so I vill trust you, for I know you to be an honest boy.

So soon as you leave Steenkamp drive straight to my house and give me de diamond. Dat's all. Now, good-night, Dave, for I am going right away."

"Hadn't you better take another look at the diamond, sir?" asked Dave.

But Mr. Gompers declined. "Once was enough," he said, and he was in a hurry, so, closing the safe after Dave had put the spool cotton box in his pocket, he hastily left the store, leaving Dave to get a bite at a Nassau street restaurant and then start uptown.

Now, it would have been wiser if Mr. Gompers had instructed the boy to take a cab, but this he did not do, for the diamond dealer, like many other people, was very close in small things, although most liberal in larger ones, when the fit seized him.

As he had not mentioned the cab, and Dave was not hiring cabs himself, he sprang upon one of those strange vehicles which have long since passed away, and found himself jolting over the rough pavement, thrown violently forward one moment and dashed back against the seat the next.

We refer to the old Broadway stage, of course, and we may add that the one Dave got into was so crowded that there was no seat for the boy at first, and he held on to the diamond, as he stood in the straw, holding on to the strap for dear life.

In those days Broadway below Fourteenth street was all ablaze with light; there were theatres and concert halls on every block; the sidewalks were thronged with pedestrians and the roadway blocked with carriages and stages.

How changed is all this! Between six and seven o'clock, nowadays, this part of Broadway is like a deserted city, the darkness and silence being broken only by the noisy cars as they go whirling along.

When the stage reached Grand street, Dave was fortunate to get a seat.

When it crossed Prince street, the man next to him got out and a lady dressed in deep mourning, with a heavy widow's veil drawn down over her face, suddenly changed her seat from the opposite side of the swaying vehicle and planted herself alongside of Dave.

Dave tried to move up, but there was no room, for a fat colored woman with a large basket occupied the seat on the other side of him and she would not budge.

Scarcely had the lady placed herself than she turned to Dave and held out her hand.

"Why, how do you do?" she exclaimed. "I am delighted to see you. Your health must have greatly improved to permit you to be out at night. Won't you shake hands?"

Dave was taken completely aback, but the lady simply thrust her hand upon him and he could not refuse it, but as he pressed her hand he said, politely, "Madam, I think you are making a mistake."

She squeezed his hand with a grip which made Dave draw it away in a hurry.

As he did so something sharp seemed to stick him in the palm, causing about as much pain as the slight prick of a pin.

Of this Dave thought nothing at the time, except that the thought flashed over him that the lady must have a pin sticking in her glove.

"Oh, no! I cannot be mistaken," she said, in a loud voice. "What, you do not know me! Dear, dear! Your old trouble in the head must have grown worse. Why, my dear boy, how can you forget your old aunt? Come, now, Charley! Look at me! That will make your mind clear."

Sam drew away her veil on the side toward Dave, so that no one besides the boy could possibly have seen her face, but the old colored woman, and she was half asleep.

Dave gave a quick gasp and clutched the diamond box with his other hand, which was deep in his coat pocket.

The face behind the veil was a horrible one.

Dark, swarthy, little eyes, very prominent nose; a black, evil face if ever there was one; a man's face, and the face which Dave had seen looking in through the rear window of Mr. Gompers' store in Maiden lane.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE IS THE STAR OF THE WEST?

Dave was terribly frightened—there is no denying it.

Why, then, it will naturally be asked, did he not immediately get up and leave the stage?

Simply because he could no more have made the move than he could have flown out the window.

Strange sensations had come over the boy. His head was whirling, his limbs tingled all over, and in a moment his whole body was in the same condition.

It was just as if a thousand needles were sticking into him, and yet to save his life he could not move nor could he speak, for his tongue seemed suddenly to have become paralyzed.

All he could do was to keep his eyes fixed upon that black veil and listen.

The man was talking rapidly in a foreign language—talking in a woman's voice—and poor Dave's head was buzzing.

Just two ideas were left in his muddled brain.

One was the diamond.

The other was that he had been poisoned by that supposed pin-prick, and this was, indeed, the truth.

Still the stage rattled on, still the strange creature behind the veil kept talking, when all at once, just as they reached Eighth street—Clinton place it was called then—Dave's head suddenly fell over upon the shoulder of the supposed woman, and so he lay, while she screamed and called out to the other passengers to stop the stage, which a sympathetic gentleman opposite immediately did.

"Oh, he is my nephew, gentlemen!" the "woman" said. "My sister's child. He is quite insane and subject to these attacks. I can't imagine how they came to let him go out alone. I must call a cab and take him right home."

This is what she said, but it is not what she did.

Dave stumbled out of the stage after her, partly helped by the gentleman and partly by the strong grip of the creature behind the veil.

He was able to walk, though he staggered, and was able to stand when they reached the curb. He knew what had happened and what he was about, but to save himself he could not hold his head up nor utter a single word.

The disguised man threw a strong arm about him and held him like a vise until the stage was out of sight.

"Walk with me. If you try to escape I will kill you!" he hissed. "Do as I tell you and no harm shall come to you from this."

Dave heard, understood, and it gave him hope.

He tried to get his hand into his coat pocket and clutch the diamond box, but it hung limply by his side and he could not raise it an inch.

But he could walk, supported by the stranger, and he did.

They crossed Broadway and went along Eighth street to Neilson place—now the upper part of Greene street. Here they turned and went down a block or two, when they suddenly paused before a green gate set in a wall and knocked in a peculiar way.

Now, every moment Dave had been getting better. He was suffering from a poison which was extremely volatile and its effects were passing away.

This poison, we may as well state right here, was contained in a ring which the stranger wore.

By slightly pressing a spring, which he was able to do by pressing the ringed-finger against the next, a sharp point shot out, puncturing the palm of the hand which he grasped and the mischief was done.

Footsteps were heard behind the gate.

"Take my hand. I'll help you," whispered the man, and he caught Dave's hand, pressed the spring and drove a second dose of the subtle fluid into the boy's palm.

Whether Dave knew what had happened or not is doubtful, but one instant later he knew nothing, for all recollection suddenly left him, and the next he was conscious of he found himself lying on a bed in an elegantly-furnished room, bril-

liantly lighted, with two men standing near a table talking in loud, angry tones.

One was a tall, stylish-looking gentleman, whom Dave instantly recognized as the man who had tried to sell Mr. Gompers the diamonds, while the other was a man of most peculiar build and hideous face—the face which Dave had such good reason to remember, and which now came back to him like a dream.

Here was the disguised man disguised no longer. His face was uglier than ever now, for he was wild with rage.

"It's a lie!" he shouted. "I'm as much in the dark about the diamond as you are! I say it's a lie!"

"Hold your noise!" hissed the other. "You have the diamond! Give it to me or, by the eternal, you will never leave this room alive!"

What did he mean? What did they both mean?

There on the table lay the spool cotton box, which Dave had tried so hard to protect, and there beside it lay a big glittering thing which Dave certainly thought was the diamond.

He began to wonder if this was all a dream.

"I tell you," retorted the man with the big nose, "that I know nothing more than I have already stated. Young Winstanley fell in a fit. The diamond was in the box, and this boy put the box in the safe. Perhaps that man Gompers changed it, but if so, is it my fault?"

"You lie! You've got it!" shouted the other. "You changed the Star of the West for this fake thing. Hand it over, Pedro, and no more nonsense about it, or——"

Bang!

Bang!

Suddenly the man Pedro drew a revolver and fired.

"Great heavens! I'm shot!" screamed the other. He made a step forward as though he would clench with his would-be murderer, and then fell downward to the floor, whereupon Pedro immediately rushed from the room.

It was a terrible situation for Dave.

If he could have spoken or moved, it would not have been so bad, but he was again in the semi-paralyzed condition in which he had found himself in the street.

For a moment the silence was broken only by the groans of the unfortunate man, then Dave saw him stagger to his feet. Bracing himself against the table the man tore off his coat and vest, and, pulling out a pocket knife, cut his shirt away, the blood streaming down all the while.

"Pshaw! It is nothing but a scratch!" he exclaimed, with an air of relief, "the bullet just grazed my side. It has stopped bleeding already. A close call, though, and Pedro shall pay for it."

He pulled on his coat and turned to the bed.

"Boy, are you awake? Do you hear me?" he demanded, in low, hissing tones.

"Yes," he whispered, faintly. "I—hear."

"Where is the diamond? Tell me if you wish to live!"

"I—don't—know! I—see—it—on—the—table—I——"

"No! No!" exclaimed the man. "That thing on the table is not the Star of the West—it is only a piece of glass, a fake, a fraud. Where is the diamond? Tell me? Tell me, now?"

Dave choked and mumbled. "I do not know."

The man bent over and looked hard in his face.

"I believe you," he said at last. "I believe you are an honest boy and mean just what you say. Pedro has changed the diamond on me and that's all there is about it. Oh, he shall suffer for this! He shall suffer for this!"

So fierce was his anger and so deeply was his attention occupied that he never noticed the smoke which was beginning to fill the room.

Dave did, though

It came to him all at once that the house was on fire, and he thought of what Adele had said about trouble coming from the diamond, as he managed to gasp out: "The smoke! The smoke!"

The man saw it, then. He had picked up the bogus diamond, and he now dashed it to the floor with an exclamation of horror.

"He has set fire to the house!" he yelled. "Get off that bed and save yourself, boy! Quick! Quick!"

He rushed toward the door and tried to open it, but it resisted all his efforts.

Thicker and more suffocating grew the smoke, as he stood there beating against the door and kicking at the panels, shouting:

"Pedro! Let me out, Pedro! Let me out!"

Was he crazy?

Did he expect the man who had shot him down, and who, perhaps, had set the building on fire for the express purpose of concealing his crime, to come to his rescue now?"

Dave did not know, and he did not care.

With all the strength he could throw out he was trying to break the awful power which held him back and move off that bed.

Useless effort, but strangely enough when the boy could not move off the bed the bed suddenly began to move off with the boy.

"Oh, the wretch! He's going to save you and let me burn!" yelled the man, turning away from the door and throwing up his hands.

The bed was slowly sinking.

Wild-eyed and scared, Dave was struggling to rise off it, his hands and feet moved, but he had not strength enough to throw himself over on the floor.

Lower and lower the bed sank, carrying Dave down with it, and a dense black smoke came pouring up through the opening in the floor.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT DIAMOND COMES TO ME IF I HAVE TO KILL A HUNDRED MEN.

Dave was beginning to believe in unlucky diamonds. In the gem trade there are many who believe in them. Mr. Gompers was one of these and Dave had heard him tell many strange stories about the ill luck which had followed certain precious stones.

The Star of the West, as Mr. Gompers had mentioned, was an especially unlucky stone.

Previous to its disappearance as one of the crown diamonds of the great Napoleon, it had belonged to one of the dukes of Mantua, in Italy, and it was stated that bad luck invariably followed each member of that family who possessed it; several were assassinated—and one walled up alive in an old church—a pleasant custom of those old Italian dukes when they wanted to get rid of any one they did not like.

Napoleon was said to have purchased the big diamond of an Amsterdam Jew, who disappeared within an hour after receiving the price, which was two hundred and fifty thousand francs, or about fifty thousand dollars of our money.

Later the body of the unfortunate man was found floating in the Seine with his pockets turned inside out.

As for Napoleon himself, within a week after buying the diamond he was banished to the island of Elba, which was the beginning of his downfall.

The Star of the West was then sold, along with other crown jewels, and after many adventures it turned up in the crown

of the Dutch king, and to every new owner bad luck certainly did come.

We could tell, if we chose, a great deal more about this curious stone, but enough has been said to show that what Mr. Gompers had stated about it was not all imagination by any means.

The Star of the West was one of the most noted "unlucky diamonds" in the world.

As for Dave, when he found that he was sinking down on that bed into the smoke he simply gave himself up for lost.

That the house was on fire there was not the slightest doubt. It was just as certain also that Pedro was waiting for him somewhere below.

As a matter of fact, Pedro was then in the cellar turning a big crank.

The crank connected with an endless chain and the chain controlled the movements of the bed.

The house, once the residence of a rich New York merchant, had in after years become a famous gambling den.

Men had been robbed of large sums there. People had been traced to this house who had mysteriously disappeared and were never heard of afterward; in short, it was just the place for these diamond crooks to carry on their evil work.

As soon as the bed struck the cellar floor it stopped, of course, and Pedro sprang upon Dave.

"Get up off of that!" he shouted. "Get up! The house is on fire! We must leave it at once!"

He caught the boy by the hand and lifted him off the bed. As he did so he worked the ring again.

Dave felt the prick of the needle, but he did not realize what it meant.

All he knew was that he suddenly felt that same tingling sensation and with it came new strength.

The fact was Pedro had used the poison once too often.

The boy's blood had now become charged with it and this dose merely had a stimulating effect and did not deprive Dave of consciousness, as the others had done.

"Come! Come!" cried Pedro, running through the cellar, which was thick with smoke.

"For heaven's sake, you don't mean to leave that man to die up there?" cried Dave.

"Mind your own business," retorted Pedro, seizing him fiercely by the arm. "You ought to be thankful that I didn't leave you there, too."

Dave said no more. If the house had not been on fire he would have held back, but no one could live long in that smoke, so he hurried on through a narrow door set in the cellar wall, to which Pedro had the key.

This took them into another cellar, Pedro hastily closed the door, and, after listening cautiously, produced a dark lantern and flashed it upon a flight of steps.

"The coast seems to be all clear," he muttered. "Come on, boy."

Up the steps, through a dark entry, out by a basement hall door and into the street—that was the way they went.

A policeman was just running around the corner. He stopped and rapped with his club on the sidewalk.

Smoke was pouring out of the upper windows of the adjoining house.

"You follow me, and if you say one word to that cop I'll kill you if I swing for it!" Pedro hissed in Dave's ear.

He then walked boldly up to the policeman.

"Say, officer, there seems to be a fire in there," he exclaimed. "My son and I just came out to see about it."

"Looks so," said the policeman. "Who lives there? It is supposed to be vacant."

"So I understand. We are boarding next door. I suppose

you will look after it. We have got to catch a train on the Hudson river road."

"Well, hain't I looking after it now?" growled the officer, and he ran up the steps and began beating on the door furiously with his club.

"That's all I wanted," chuckled young Pedro. "Come on, young feller."

He caught Dave's arm and hurried him around the corner. Once out of sight he started down Neilson place on the run, and, sometimes running, sometimes walking, kept on until he came to the corner of Fourth and Wooster streets.

This was the old French quarter. French signs were everywhere and in spite of the early hour—it was between one and two o'clock in the morning—more than one of the basement wine shops were open for business; the police were not very particular about such matters in those days.

Pedro turned into one, hurrying down a flight of steps, still keeping hold of Dave's arm.

"What's your name, boy?" he demanded, before opening the door.

"Dave."

"Dave what?"

"Dave Hartwell."

"Now, look here, Dave Hartwell, you rub me the right way I'm all right, but rub me the wrong way and I'm worse than the devil—understand."

Dave muttered assent.

"How do you feel?" asked Pedro.

"I feel funny, but not as bad as I did."

"You'll be getting better and better all the time now. Look here, when we get inside I shall call for a bottle of wine, but on your life don't you drink any unless you want to die."

"I never do drink."

"That's all right. Don't do it, now. Come on."

He opened the door and Dave followed him into the saloon, simply because he did not dare to run away.

It was a dirty place, and so thick with tobacco smoke that at first Dave could scarcely make out what it looked like.

A long black bar ran nearly the whole length of the room and along the wall opposite many little round tables were placed.

Quite a number of foreigners were at these tables smoking, all jabbering away in French or some other foreign language; the smoke, the vile smell of the place and the clatter of tongues made Dave's brain fairly reel.

Pedro took his place at one of the tables, the one nearest the door it happened, and called for a bottle of wine, which was promptly brought.

It seemed strange business to be going on here just the same as if it had been daytime, but Dave knew nothing about the French quarter of New York or he would have known that it was the same way every night.

Pedro poured out two glasses of the wine, set one before Dave and drank half of the other himself; then, looking warily around, he changed the glasses and drank half of Dave's.

"Now we can talk," he whispered; "no one will pay any attention to us."

"What do you want to talk about?" demanded Dave. "What have I got to do with you, anyhow? Why don't you let me go?"

"Hello! You are brightening up, are you?" replied Pedro. "Well, that's the way it strikes 'em all. You'll be all right now. Tell me about that diamond. Tell me all you know straight and square, and then I will let you go."

"Why, I haven't got anything to tell that you don't know," replied Dave. "You looked in the window. You saw what

happened. You probably know as much about the diamond as I know myself."

"I know this much," hissed Pedro, leaning over the table and thrusting his ugly face close into Dave's; "that diamond comes to me if I have to kill a hundred men to get it, boy; do you understand?"

CHAPTER V.

IS ALL THIS THE WORK OF THE UNLUCKY GEM?

At no time since he fell into the hands of this strange man had Dave been more frightened than he was now.

If he had dared he would have sprung up from the table and rushed out of the place. Pedro's terrible eye did more to keep him chained than the effects of the drug.

"Listen," continued Pedro. "I no longer think that you know anything about the changing of the diamond for that piece of glass; the question is, who did it, how was it done and where is the diamond now?"

"I'm sure I can't tell you anything at all about it," replied Dave.

"No; perhaps not, but you can answer my questions," was the reply, "and by answering them you may tell me what I want to know without being aware of it. Don't speak loud, now, just answer each question as I put it to you and be sure that your answers are true. First, did your people know that boy from Brazil who brought in the stone?"

"No; we never saw him before."

"What became of him after he fell in the fit?"

"Mr. Gompers called the ambulance and sent him to the Chambers Street Hospital."

"Did he come out of his fit?"

"No."

"You think it was a real fit; that he was not shamming?"

"I am sure of it. There isn't the least doubt about that."

"When I looked in the window and scared you all where was the diamond?"

"On the showcase in the spool cotton box."

"Nobody watching it?"

"Well, I don't think anybody was watching it for the moment. We were all pretty well startled."

"Had Mr. Gompers looked at the diamond before that?"

"No."

"He looked at it afterward, though?"

"Yes. He just glanced at it—that was all."

"And put it right back in the box?"

"Yes."

"Didn't he look at it after the boy was taken away in the ambulance?"

"No."

"Not when he gave it to you to take uptown?"

"No; he said it was not necessary, because he knew the stone."

"Ha!" cried Pedro. "He knew the stone, did he? Did he call it by a name?"

"Yes, he said it was known as the Star of the West."

"So, so. The fox recognized it. Well, so he ought, so he ought. Where were you taking the diamond to, my boy, when I met you in the Broadway stage?"

Dave told his destination. He saw no harm in it now, moreover he did not dare to hold back the truth.

"Steenkamp," sneered Pedro. "I know him. He knows a fat lot about diamonds. Yet he would have had a fit when he saw that piece of glass. Who were those women in the store?"

"One was Miss Adele Bradford, our clerk; the other was an actress, a customer."

"So? What was her name?"

"Irene Duchenelle."

"Don't know her. Where is she playing?"

"She is in the burlesque company which is playing at Niblo's Garden, I believe."

"Do you think it is possible that Miss Bradford could have changed the diamond?"

"No, no!"

"She is honest?"

"Strictly so."

"Was there anything like that piece of glass in the store?"

"Nothing of the sort."

"As soon as you recovered from your astonishment when I looked in the window you put the diamond in the box?"

"Yes."

"You covered the box?"

"Yes."

"Sure?"

"Positive."

"The diamond did not seem to have been disturbed at all? It looked just as it did before your attention was taken off of it?"

"Just the same."

"Are you a judge of diamonds?"

"Not much of a one. I can tell if there are flaws and—"

"Any fool can do that. You are not a judge, then?"

"Not of such a stone as that."

"But you think you could tell a piece of glass from a genuine stone?"

"Certainly."

"Did you look at the diamond after Mr. Gompers gave it to you to take up to the hotel?"

"No."

"Then," said Pedro, dropping his voice still lower, "the case is like this, either the actress, or that scoundrel we left behind us, or Mr. Gompers himself changed the stone."

"It couldn't have been Mr. Gompers. I tell you he had no chance to do it. He only glanced at the diamond and then put it right back into the box."

"He examined it with a glass, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"How long did he have it in his hand?"

"Less than a minute."

"Plenty of time to do the change act; still, I agree with you that he probably is not the one. Now, boy, I—who are you? What do you want? Ah!"

The door had opened and a tall man, wrapped in a queer foreign cloak, entered.

Glancing at Pedro, he hurried to him and stood staring at the man, and then suddenly said something in a foreign tongue.

Pedro's first response was as above, then he spoke some hurried words in the same language, springing up and facing the man.

The instant he had uttered them the newcomer sprang at his throat.

A fierce struggle followed.

The two men clenched, fell on the floor, rolled over and over and all amid the greatest confusion and excitement, for every man in the place sprang up and all closed about the struggling pair.

This was Dave's chance and he lost not an instant in availing himself of it.

What the outcome of the affair was he never knew, for he sprang up from the table, popped out of the door and ran up

the steps, sprinting off down the street as fast as his legs could carry him.

The semi-paralysis of the poison was broken.

Dave forgot all about his strange feeling until he reached Broadway, when they began to come back to him in part.

There was a stage passing uptown and he sprang into it and rode to Thirty-fourth street and then walked rapidly west to the house on that street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues, where he had his room.

He was terribly excited—half crazy over it all, in fact, for he knew perfectly well that Mr. Gompers would never forgive him.

Indeed, he looked for nothing short of being arrested, and his brain was fairly reeling, when he got into his room, and, without undressing, threw himself face down upon his bed.

That was the time the poison of the ring finished its work.

Dave fell into a deep sleep and never woke up until half-past six; when it took him some time to collect his wits and recollect all that had occurred.

He was in a bad fix and he fully realized it.

Still, there was nothing to do but to face the music, so, after breakfast, he started downtown, feeling no ill effects from the strange drug, but terribly disturbed in his mind.

He left the car at Eighth street and walked around into Neilson place to have a look at the house to which he had been taken.

Sure enough there had been a fire; the interior of the house was all burned out, but the walls still stood.

Dave looked up at the blackened, gaping windows in silent perplexity.

There was a policeman standing guard at the foot of the steps, but he was not the same man whom Dave had seen in the night.

"Anybody burned in there?" asked Dave, stepping up to the officer.

"No," was the answer, "house was vacant."

"Seems to have been pretty well cleaned out?"

The policeman did not seem much inclined to talk.

He growled out a gruff "Yes" and Dave hurried away.

"How quick he would nab me if he knew what I know," he thought.

He now boarded a University place car and soon found himself at the Astor House, from whence he walked to Maiden lane.

To his surprise he saw a fire engine standing on Broadway.

"Hello!" muttered Dave, "there has been a fire here, too. Can't be far from our place, either."

Still, as he hurried down the street he never dreamed of its being Mr. Gompers' store until he was half-way down the block, and then he saw just how the case stood.

The building next below was a wreck and the diamond store had gone with it.

The walls had fallen and the destruction was complete. Not a trace of the old shop remained.

"Well, upon my word!" gasped Dave, joining the crowd which had collected outside the rope stretched across the sidewalk.

Somebody touched his arm and said, "Oh, Dave!"

It was Adele.

She looked pale and frightened.

"How did it happen, Dave?" she asked.

"I'm sure I don't know, Adele. I've just come," replied Dave, more disturbed than she was. "Dear me, this is a terrible thing. I suppose the stock is all gone. What will Mr. Gompers say? Oh, Adele, you were right about trouble following that infernal diamond. It is right upon us now."

"I should say it was. I felt it last night. I knew something was going to happen. Where is the diamond, Dave?"

"Lost," replied Dave, hoarsely.

"What? You don't mean it?"

Before Dave could say another word a young man came hurrying up to them, whom both recognized as Mr. Morganstern, Mr. Gompers' nephew.

"Well, well, Dave! This is a great piece of business!" he exclaimed, raising his hat to Adele. "When did it happen? How did it catch?"

"I'm sure I can't tell you. I've just come," replied Dave. "Where is Mr. Gompers? What will he say?"

A peculiar look passed over young Morganstern's face.

"Why, I don't think he will say anything," he replied.

"This is a bad piece of business, Dave, but I've got worse to tell you; the old man's gone!"

"What!" cried Dave.

"Gone where? What do you mean?" gasped Adele.

"Dead!"

"No."

Dave almost screamed out the word.

"Yes, unfortunately it is true. He dropped dead last night at my cousin's wedding. Heart disease, the doctor says, although no one ever knew that he had it. Yes, it's a bad job all around."

It was undoubtedly a bad job for Dave and Adele, who were dependent on Mr. Gompers for a living.

But Dave was not thinking of that now.

He was thinking of the unlucky diamond.

Was all this the work of the Star of the West?

CHAPTER VI.

* IS THE DIAMOND AT ITS WORK AGAIN?

Two weeks passed and Dave Hartwell still found himself working for that very unsatisfactory firm, "Street, Walker & Doolittle!"

In other words, he was out of a job.

Mr. Gompers was dead, the store was burned down and the stock destroyed.

The heirs of the defunct diamond dealer were now quarrelling over his estate and there was not the least chance that any one of them would open up the business elsewhere and offer employment to Dave.

As for Adele, Dave did not know what had become of her.

Adele had always been a reticent girl; Dave knew but little about her; he did not even know her address.

And Dave dated the beginning of his troubles from the moment the boy from Brazil entered the store.

Now he was out of business and out of money and expecting daily to be turned out of his room for non-payment of rent.

It was a bad job all around. The only good thing about it so far as Dave could see was that he had never been called upon to make a report on the diamond.

It concerned nobody but Mr. Gompers and the boy from Brazil.

Mr. Gompers was dead and when Dave called at the Chambers Street Hospital, which he did on the morning of the fire, he was told that Gordon Winstanley had been discharged early that morning.

He left no address behind him and the hospital superintendent could give no information whatever about the boy.

It was a strange ending to a strange affair and as the days passed Dave, in the unsuccessful search for work, tried to

forget about the Star of the West, but unsuccessfully, for the diamond was ever uppermost in his mind. It would not down.

One rainy evening as Dave was walking up Broadway he met with another adventure which certainly had to do with the diamond, so we may as well mention it here.

He had just crossed Grand street when a closed carriage suddenly pulled up against the curb and a woman's hand came out of the window and beckoned to Dave.

He did not understand at first, but just looked at the carriage and was passing on when the driver called out:

"Say, it's you the lady wants, young feller! Hey!"

"Me?" cried Dave.

The recollection of his previous adventure with a mysterious female flashed over him, and he drew back.

"Don't be afraid! It's only me! I won't hurt you!" called a pleasant voice from the carriage window, and then, as Dave approached, she added:

"Don't you recollect me, young man?"

"Miss Duchenelle!" exclaimed Dave, lifting his hat. "Oh, yes, I remember you very well."

"You ought to. Step in here with me. I am on my way to Niblo's. I've got a favor to ask of you."

Dave could not refuse, so he got into the carriage.

"Do you remember that big diamond which came into Mr. Gompers' store the night before it was burned?" asked Miss Duchenelle, as the carriage rattled on toward the theatre.

"I am not likely to forget it," replied Dave. "It made me trouble enough. What do you know about it, Miss Duchenelle?"

"What do you mean by speaking in that tone?" cried the actress. Bless me! One would think that you were going to accuse me of stealing the diamond next. You are as rude as Mr. Gompers. I'm sorry I called you in here. I—oh, mercy on me! What's this?"

Did the mere mention of the unlucky diamond bring misfortune or was Dave himself the "Jonah" in the case?

Suddenly there was a crash and a violent shock and the carriage, minus a wheel, went over on the slippery pavement, throwing poor Dave on top of Miss Duchenelle, from which position he extracted himself in a hurry, breaking the glass in the door with his elbow in his haste to get out.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! I've broken my arm!" cried the actress. "Help me! Help me!"

Dave tried to do the best he could, but the unfortunate lady screamed so that he could not raise her up.

The carriage had stopped and a crowd collected.

"Stand back here!" cried a stern voice, and a man wearing a handsome astrakhan overcoat elbowed his way through the crowd.

"Stand back here!" he cried again. "I'm a detective. Young man, you are my prisoner!"

Down came a heavy hand upon Dave's shoulder and he was jerked back by the coat collar.

"He's wanted for picking pockets!" exclaimed the detective. "Come along, now. No guff."

"But I was in the carriage!" gasped Dave. "You are making a mistake."

"Not on your life," sneered the man. "I know my business! Somebody help that lady out. I've got my hands full here."

He had, for Dave was struggling to free himself all he knew.

He was terribly frightened, for he had recognized his captor now.

It was the man whom he had left behind him in the burning house.

"No monkey business!" he hissed in Dave's ear. "You know me! Beware!"

"Let go of that boy!" shouted a young fellow, darting out of the crowd. "I know he is no pickpocket. I saw him get out of the carriage myself."

"You!" gasped the bogus detective, falling back.

They were right under a big street lamp.

It was light enough and Dave had as little trouble as his captor in recognizing the young fellow who had jumped in to his rescue.

He knew him instantly.

It was the boy who came up from Brazil.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVE SEES THE DIAMOND AGAIN.

Once more the unlucky diamond seemed to have got Dave into trouble.

The "detective," whom Dave instantly recognized as his old enemy, the well-dressed man who had been shot by Pedro in the house in Neilson place, had a firm grip on our hero when the boy from Brazil sprang into the fight.

But Dave showed that he was amply able to help himself.

He hauled off and gave his captor a stunner between the eyes, which sent him sprawling.

"Stop him! Hold him! He's a thief!" shouted the fellow, trying to pick himself up.

Biff—bang!

Down he went again and this time it was the boy from Brazil who did the business.

"Run for your life!" he whispered to Dave. "Fight your way out of this crowd!"

This was just what Dave did.

He struck out right and left and, thanks to the confusion on account of the break-down and the screams of Miss Duchenne, which got everybody mixed up, Dave managed to gain the opposite side of the way.

But he did not run here—he knew too much for that.

There were many people running toward the upset carriage.

Dave stopped short, turned up his collar, pulled his hat down over his eyes and appeared to join them.

Several excited men rushed past him, calling out: "Stop thief! Stop thief!" but they paid no attention to Dave, and why should they, for he was coming toward them and not running away?

As soon as he got into the middle of Broadway, Dave turned down and struck a diagonal line over to the side where the wrecked carriage was and then struck around the corner and felt himself safe.

It was shrewdly done, for if he had run he would have been captured to a dead certainty and there was no telling what the end might be.

Now, for the first time, Dave stopped to think of the boy from Brazil.

"What a pity that I missed that fellow," he muttered. "I might have found out something about the diamond. Of course, there is next to no chance of my ever seeing him again."

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind when a hand was laid on his shoulder, which brought Dave up with a start.

He thought that he was caught then to a certainty and he was immensely relieved when he turned and saw the object of his thoughts.

Once more Dave found himself face to face with the boy who came up from Brazil.

"You!" exclaimed Dave. "I thought——"

"That it was the detective," broke in the boy. "No, young

fellow, it's only me. I was watching you all the time. You did that slick. Gave 'em the slip completely. Strange that we should all meet there again. Very, very strange! But come on, we may be followed. We had better keep on the move."

He put his arm through Dave's and hurried him on until they reached old Laurens street, afterward South Fifth avenue, now West Broadway.

Dingy houses lined both sides of the block, the mud and slush was ankle deep and the feeble gaslights scarcely showed them their way."

"Where are we going?" asked Dave.

"Say, what's your name?" asked the boy, in a whisper.

There was something about his tone which made Dave think that he had been almost as badly frightened as himself and that he was frightened still.

"Well, my name is Dave Hartwell," he replied. "If I remember right, yours is Gordon Winstanley."

"That's right. Say, you are the fellow I saw in the diamond shop on Maiden lane, are you not?"

"I am."

"I was sure of it. I've been looking everywhere for you. The shop burned down and I heard the man that kept it was dead. I couldn't get trace of you anywhere. I called at his house to ask about my diamond, but no one seemed to know anything about it and no one knew where you lived."

"I suppose you were troubled about the diamond," said Dave. "I can tell you all I know about it right now."

"Not here," said the boy, hastily. "Not here! Don't breathe a word. That stone is an unlucky one. It brings trouble wherever it strikes. Dear knows, it has brought trouble enough to me."

"And to me, too," replied Dave, bitterly. "It has ruined me. I've lost my place, and——"

"You're lucky you didn't lose your life."

"Indeed, I think I came mighty near it."

"Ah, ha! The diamond did its work for you, did it? But I won't talk in the street. My room is close by. Come with me and we will talk it over there, Dave."

Dave saw no reason to object, so he followed the boy to a tumble-down old brick dwelling and was led upstairs to a small hall bedroom on the top floor.

Here the boy lighted a lamp, and, having locked the door, motioned Dave to the only chair, taking a seat on the bed himself.

"Now then, Dave, I'd like to hear your story," he said. "If it is any stranger than mine it must be strange indeed."

"I don't know what you will say when you do hear it," replied Dave, "but you must not blame me. I tried to do my best about the diamond, but it was all too much for me. Here goes."

As briefly as possible Dave told what had occurred from the moment the diamond was first placed in his hands.

Gordon Winstanley listened with close attention.

"All that you say doesn't surprise me a bit," he said. "The man who tried to arrest you to-night I don't know at all, but the man you call Pedro I know to my sorrow, for he tracked me a thousand miles through the wilds of Brazil and I have not the least doubt that he is still following me. It wouldn't surprise me, either, to see him appear in this room at any moment. He's a terrible man, a fiend of the worst type. I wish I had given him the diamond at the start, that's what I do."

"Well, all I can say is that I wish I had never seen the diamond," replied Dave, "but you can't hold me responsible for losing it, Gordon, if I may call you by your first name."

"Do, Dave. You're a good fellow, and I like you. Hold you responsible? Not much. It's the diamond that is respon-

sible for it all. You never lost it—you never had it. I know more about the business than you think."

"Perhaps you do," replied Dave. "When I tell you that I don't know anything about it I tell you the truth."

"Of course."

"It makes me mad, though, to think how I have been fooled. I'd just like to know where the diamond is now."

"You would?" cried Gordon, with a curious twinkle in his eyes.

"I would, indeed."

"Well, I can tell you."

"You?"

"Yes; I am the very fellow who knows; look here, Dave!"

With an air of triumph, Gordon thrust his hand into his pocket and, drawing it out again, laid something upon the little table where the lamp stood.

"Great Scott! The diamond!" gasped Dave.

At the same instant a dull report, like muffled thunder, was heard and the whole house seemed to shake.

CHAPTER VIII.

PEDRO RIGHT ON HAND.

"What on earth was that?" cried Dave, springing to his feet. Gordon covered the diamond with his hand and turned as pale as death.

"More trouble!" he gasped. "This infernal stone is at its work again."

"That's nonsense," said Dave. "There has been an explosion somewhere in the neighborhood."

He threw open the door and listened.

He could hear other people opening the doors on the floors below and there was one opened further along on the same floor and a woman looked out.

"Downstairs people were calling out to each other to know what the matter was, but nobody seemed to know."

"Shut the door," whispered Gordon. "It doesn't concern us, anyhow. Come back into the room."

Dave obeyed. The door was locked and the diamond was placed upon the table again.

But these two boys had made a vast and terrible mistake. The noise did concern them most decidedly, as they were soon to learn.

"Where in the world did you get it, Gordon?" asked Dave. "As far as I am any judge, it is the same stone."

"Of course it is the same stone," replied the boy, with a chuckle. "Where did I get it? Why, I picked it up in the street. I found it on Broadway."

"No!"

"Oh, yes!"

"When?"

"To-night."

"You don't mean it! Where?"

"Where? Why, where I met you—where that woman dropped it out of her pocket or her hand, wherever she had it when the cab upset."

"Who in the world do you mean? Miss Duchenelle?"

"I don't know what her name is, but it was she who stole the diamond and changed it for that imitation stone. I saw her do it, Dave. Don't stare. Although I had started in on my fit, I still knew what I was about. The moment we all turned to look at Pedro's face at the window and our attention was off the diamond that woman snatched it out of the case and slipped another into its place. That was the fake, but

she pocketed the real stone. I saw her do it, but I couldn't speak."

"Is that so?" cried Dave. "That accounts for her wanting to see me and for her getting mad when I tried to talk to her about the diamond."

"I don't know anything about that," replied Gordon. "All I know is that I happened to be walking along the street when I saw the carriage upset and, of course, I stopped to look. When I saw you come out I made a rush to help the lady and you, too, and then all at once I saw this thing glittering on the pavement. You bet I grabbed it quick. I didn't realize who the lady was until then."

"Strange," mused Dave. "You are sure she changed the stone?"

"Positive. I'll swear to it in any court. If I had known what her name was you bet I would have made it hot for her, but I could not succeed in getting any information anywhere, so I was all at sea."

"I suppose, of course, she, being an actress, had lots of bogus diamonds," remarked Dave. "In fact, I know she did, for we sold her some ourselves. Say, this is a magnificent stone! I never laid eyes on anything like it. What do you propose to do with it, now that it has come back into your hands?"

"Sell it as soon as ever I can. That's what I want to talk to you about. I want you to help me get rid of the infernal thing."

"Upon my word, I don't know whether I want to do that or not," replied Dave. "The diamond has made me so much trouble that I had a good sight rather leave it alone."

"Oh, pshaw! There can be no danger in just giving a fellow a little information. You know the whole diamond trade in New York, I suppose?"

"I certainly do."

"Well, then, help a feller. I'll do the right thing by you. What do you suppose the thing is worth?"

"It's worth a great deal of money. I think I can take you to a man who might buy it. What will you give me if it's a sale?"

"Come, I'll be liberal with you at the start and there need be no haggling. I'll give you a quarter of all you can get for it, so there."

"That means a good deal of money," replied Dave, who, of course, had Mr. Steenkamp in mind. "Well, I'll try; but, first, don't you think you ought to tell me where you got the diamond?"

"Do you think I stole it, Dave?" demanded Gordon, rather hotly.

"I didn't say so, and I wasn't thinking so. I shall be asked these questions and I shall want to know how to answer—that is all."

"You are right. I do owe you an explanation and I'll tell you the whole story," replied Gordon, turning the diamond over and over in his hand. "You see, I am a sailor. I ran away from home and shipped on the tramp steamer—oh! Oh, Dave! Help me! Save me! Look there!"

Suddenly the boy broke off in his speech with a yell of terror and pointed to the window.

It was the scene in Mr. Gompers' store enacted over again. There, pressed against the glass, was the dark, evil face of the man Pedro, regarding them with a wicked smile.

"Put up the diamond!" cried Dave, springing to his feet. Instead of obeying—and it is doubtful if he even heard—Gordon uttered a wild cry, flung up his hands and fell in another fit.

The diamond dropped on the floor and rolled away under the bed and at the same instant Pedro flung up the window-sash and stepped off the fire-escape into the room.

Dave caught up the chair to defend himself.

"Get out of here!" he cried. "Get out of here, or I'll brain you! Don't you dare lay a hand on that boy!"

But Pedro was not the sort to be bluffed or scared.

With a fierce snarl, he sprang upon Dave, dodged the blow, caught the chair, wrenched it away and brought it down upon the head of our hero with a force which might easily have broken his skull and which did send him down on top of Gordon Winstanley as completely unconscious as if he had fallen in a fit himself.

"At last!" hissed Pedro. "Lucky I saw them there when the carriage upset. Lucky I was sharp enough to trace them here. Now, at last, the diamond is mine!"

He seized the lamp and crawled under the bed, paying no attention whatever to Gordon, who, underneath poor Dave's unconscious form, was writhing in an epileptic fit.

What he expected to do was to come out again in a moment with the far-famed Star of the West clutched in his hand.

What he did do was to come out after five minutes, with his swarthy face almost white with rage.

"It's not there!" he snarled. "It must have rolled into that big rat-hole—it's not there, but I'll have it if I have to tear up every board in the floor!"

CHAPTER IX.

PRISONERS IN THE WRECKED HOUSE.

Dave heard this remark, for he came back to his senses at the same moment.

He scrambled to his feet and faced Pedro, who whipped out an ugly looking knife and confronted him, hissing, between his set teeth:

"No noise, boy! Quiet! Quiet! If you don't keep still I'll drive this thing into you!"

Dave's breath came short and quick. If he could only grab the knife. That is what he was thinking of then.

But before there was time to say a word, or before Pedro could make a move, that same mysterious sound was heard again, instantly followed by such a shaking of the old house that Dave was almost thrown off his feet.

Pedro uttered a fierce exclamation in some foreign language, rushed past Dave and sprang out upon the fire-escape.

Dave was frightened, too—thoroughly frightened.

He thought the house was falling, and he was right.

Instantly there came a frightful crash and the whole rear wall fell, carrying the fire-escape with it and also part of the floor of the room and the rest tilted so that the body of Gordon Winstanley rolled over the edge and disappeared amid a cloud of dust.

Shrieks—yells—horrible cries broke out all around poor Dave, who, catching hold of the bed, held on for dear life.

But the bed was slipping into the abyss.

At the same instant the door flew open behind the terrified boy, the bolt having lost its hold.

Dave sprang back through the opening into the hall.

"Save me! Save me!" screamed a voice behind him.

It was the girl who had looked out of the adjoining room. She clutched Dave by the arm, shrieking with fear.

"Adele!" gasped the boy. "Oh, Adele! Is it you?"

"Dave!" she cried. "For heaven's sake, how came you in this dreadful house? Save me, Dave! It's falling down! No, no! Not that way! Don't you see that the stars have gone already? Oh, what shall we do? What shall we do?"

It was strange—very strange that Dave should meet his fellow-clerk here.

But he grasped the situation and Adele at the same time.

"How came you here, Adele?" he demanded, throwing his arm about her. "Keep cool, now! If there is any way of saving you it is going to be done."

"Why, I live here," wailed the girl. "This is my home. Oh, Dave, what shall we do?"

"We will try and get out by the roof," said Dave. "Is there no scuttle? There must be one—oh—it's too late! We are lost!"

Once more that frightful sound was heard and this time was to be the last, for the wretched old rookery, which ought to have been condemned years before, collapsed altogether and, bringing down parts of the adjoining houses with it, fell, a heap of ruins, into the street.

It was one of those dreadful happenings which every now and then startle New York City into a realizing sense of how badly its affairs are managed.

Many lives were lost in the old Laurens street wreck that night, but Dave Hartwell and Adele Bradford, strange to say, escaped unharmed.

Perhaps we should not say escaped, however, for Mr. Gompers' two unfortunate clerks found themselves prisoners in the ruins and when they had a chance to collect their thoughts and to realize what had happened there seemed to be no such thing as escape.

The central portion of the house in which they happened to be when the final crash came did not fall altogether, but remained intact up to the second story.

From these rooms the family which occupied them made their escape at the first alarm, and when the final crash came Dave and Adele fell down with a mass of rubbish, landing on a feather bed.

This saved their lives. The broken boards and beams formed a sort of pent-house roof above their heads, ready to collapse and crush them at any instant, but firm enough for the time being.

In the part of the room, which they could see around them by the light of a small lamp which stood on a table, nothing seemed to have been disturbed, but everything was buried in a vast mass of dust.

How he scrambled up and got Adele off the bed Dave hardly knew, for his head must have struck somewhere and he was terribly confused.

"Adele! Oh, Adele! Are you hurt?" he gasped. "Oh, this is a terrible thing!"

"I'm not hurt, Dave," replied the girl, more calmly than one would have expected, "but you are—your head is all bleeding!"

"No, no! It is nothing! We must get out of this instantly or those beams will fall and crush us!"

It was easier said than done.

Dave caught up the lamp and flashed the light around.

There was no way out; they were blocked off on all sides.

They could hear the loud shouts of the people in the street and the dropping of odd bricks and bits of rubbish, but here they were and here they were likely to stay.

Then Dave thought of poor Gordon.

"Of course, he is dead!" he muttered. "Of course, he is dead!"

"Who?" asked Adele. "Tell me, Dave, what brought you here? Don't look so white. We may escape yet. The worst is surely over now."

"I don't know whether it is or not," answered Dave. "You want to know what brought me here? Well, it was that infernal big diamond. The person I was talking about is that boy from Brazil."

"He's mad," murmured Adele. "Poor fellow! He is out of his head."

"Not me!" cried Dave. "You are wrong if it is me you are talking about. I am no more mad than you are, Adele. You haven't forgotten the big diamond, I suppose?"

"Forgotten it—no! How could I forget it when my troubles began the night it was brought into the store?"

"And mine," said Dave, hoarsely. "If it had not been for that unlucky stone I should not be here now and—oh, Adele! Look there!"

Perhaps the excited boy actually thought he was going mad at that moment, for there, over in one corner, against a fallen beam, lay something bright and glittering.

"It's the diamond!" cried Adele.

And that was exactly what it was.

There it lay within reach of Dave's hand, the unlucky Star of the West.

CHAPTER X.

DAN STRIKES A STREAK OF LUCK.

Excited though he was by the terrible ordeal through which he had just passed, Dan lost no time in crawling under the overhanging beams and possessing himself of the diamond.

"Here it is, Adele! Here it is!" he exclaimed. "It's the Star of the West. I'll tell you how it got here. It fell down the rat-hole and when the building went to pieces it dropped into this room. I'll tell you the whole story, and——"

"Don't! Don't!" cried Adele. "Throw the unlucky thing away, Dave. It has brought all this trouble upon us. Oh, we shall never, never get out of here. Oh, Dave, what shall we do?"

"Keep cool," said Dave; "we are sure to get out sooner or later. The police will order a search made—we shall be found. Don't worry about it, Adele."

He slipped the diamond into his pocket and said no more about it, for he saw that it troubled Adele, and during the next half hour he kept close beside the frightened girl, encouraging her all he could and answering the calls of those working on the outside of the ruins who were endeavoring to save the lives of the few unfortunates who had been caught in the crash.

And Dave and Adele were at last rescued with the rest.

They came out without a scratch, too, and Dave found himself quite a hero among the crowd for a short time.

He was soon separated from Adele, however. The girl had an aunt living on the next block, who came promptly to the scene of the disaster and took Adele home with her.

Meanwhile, Dave joined in the work of rescue, for he was most anxious to learn the fate of Gordon Winstanley, but in this he failed.

No trace of the boy could be discovered. Work was still going on when daylight came. Dave hovered about the ruins assisting all he could.

"You'd better give it up and go and get breakfast, my boy," said one of the policemen, kindly. "You have worked well and you must be all used up. Leave your address and if your friend is found I will send you word."

Just as Dave was about to start, another officer came hurrying up.

"They have just uncovered a body in the rear," he said. "Let the young fellow come around and see if he can identify him. It's not Winstanley, though—it's an older man."

"I didn't know anybody in the house except Winstanley and Miss Bradford," replied Dave.

But the policeman insisted upon his going, and he went.

There lay the body of an elderly man, stretched out upon the flagstones in the back yard. It was terribly disfigured, but

Dave knew at a glance that it was Pedro. The recognition was perfect. There was no chance for mistake.

"Do you know him?" asked the officer.

Dave's mind was already made up.

"No," he said, "I do not know him," and it was true, for what did he know of Pedro but his name, which was probably a false one?

To have gone into details would only have made it necessary to tell about the diamond, and this Dave was resolved not to do.

The unlucky stone was safe in his pocket and he was determined that it should stay there until he had a chance to think of the best plan of disposing of it.

"It belongs to that boy from Brazil," he kept saying to himself, "and nobody else gets it until I am sure that he is dead."

And in case he was able to assure himself of that fact Dave made up his mind that the Star of the West belonged to him, and he intended to keep it, too.

A week passed. The papers were through talking about the house that had tumbled down in Laurens street.

Dave watched them closely, though, for he was answering advertisements, trying to find work.

One day he saw a guarded advertisement under the head of "Lost and Found," which he knew must mean Irene Duchenne. It read as follows:

"Lost on Broadway, a large, unset diamond of great value. Any one having found such a stone will do well to communicate with Messrs. Tumbrill & Oaks, attorneys, No. 88 Pine street. A liberal reward will be paid for its recovery and no questions asked."

Dave laughed heartily at this "ad."

"You don't get it, anyhow," he said to himself. "Whatever else becomes of it the diamond don't go back to you."

And it never did, so right here we drop Miss Irene Duchenne.

At the end of a week, Dave began to regard the big diamond as his own.

Still there was the uncertainty, for Gordon Winstanley's body had not been discovered among the ruins of the fallen house.

On the following Monday, Dave put an "ad." in the paper, asking for information about the boy.

He waited another week and got no answer.

Meanwhile, the diamond apparently had brought no further bad luck to its possessor. The sky had not fallen, Dave had not broken a leg or an arm; everything seemed to be going on just about the same and he concluded that it would now be safe to go up to the Brunswick and interview Mr. Steenkamp and find out what could be done with the big stone.

Before doing so, however, he called on Adele.

He had been to the house several times and Adele knew the whole story and was greatly interested in the diamond.

On this occasion, however, Dave was disappointed. To his great surprise, he found that Adele had sailed for England, with her aunt, the day before. Nobody in the house knew why they had gone nor when they expected to return.

Dave bought the morning paper and sat down on one of the benches in Union Square to read it, and the first "ad." his eyes lighted on was this:

"Wanted, a young man who is a fairly good judge of diamonds to go down to Brazil on special business. To the right party a liberal offer will be made. None need apply who cannot furnish references as to honesty and ability. Apply at once to Lazarus & Wertheimer, No. — John street, upstairs."

"That's me!" cried Dave, springing up off the bench. "That's my job!"

And so, indeed, it proved.

Dave knew Lazarus & Wertheimer well and, what was better, they knew him as a young man in whom Mr. Gompers had felt perfect confidence.

As soon as he walked into the office, Mr. Lazarus threw up both hands.

"By gracious, Dave, you are de very feller ve want!" he cried. "Ve have been looking for you everyvere. Vili you go to Brazil for our firm?"

"Of course I will," replied Dave. "That's what I came here for to answer your 'ad.' What are you willing to pay?"

"A hundred dollars a month and expenses to you, Dave. Can you sail to-morrow?"

"Certainly I can," replied Dave, promptly.

"And the terms?"

"Are satisfactory."

"Den it's a go, Dave?" asked Mr. Lazarus, eagerly.

"Yes."

"Settled. I'll explain your business on board the steamer. In the meantime, don't ask me one question, for dis is a private matter. Go to de bookkeeper and he vill give you a check for five hundred. Dat vill cover your fare and give you something to spend. Ve can trust you, Dave."

Here was a streak of luck.

How about the unlucky diamond now?

Dave made sure that he was to be sent to the world-famous Brazilian diamond mines and to visit them had been the dream of his life.

CHAPTER XI.

OFF FOR BRAZIL.

It was with the greatest enthusiasm that Dave went about his preparations for the voyage.

Mr. Lazarus was an old friend of Mr. Gompers' and a decidedly liberal man. He had always liked Dave, and, being now so pleased to have been able to engage him, he took the boy to his own tailor's and ordered two suits of clothes, one of thick cloth for the voyage and one thin, for wear in Brazil, with the express understanding that they were to be ready the next day at noon.

He talked a lot to Dave, as was his custom, but not one word did he say about the nature of the business upon which Dave was going to South America.

Knowing the man to be very secretive by nature, Dave did not ask him any questions, trusting to receive his instructions before the steamer sailed.

All that he knew was that he had, acting under instructions, purchased a ticket for Para, at the mouth of the Amazon River.

It was a big disappointment to Dave when he found that he was not going to Rio Janeiro, but that could not be helped.

"The steamer sails at three o'clock, Dave," said Mr. Lazarus, when they finally parted. "Be on hand at two-thirty at least, for I shall have a lot to tell you. So long until then."

Next day, Dave went on board the City of Rio Janeiro at two o'clock in the hope of meeting Mr. Lazarus a bit earlier.

He had engaged the best stateroom on the steamer and after he had seen his trunk in place he went on deck to have a look around.

There were not many passengers on board as yet—and, indeed, we may mention right here that there were only a few when the steamer sailed—so Dave soon grew tired of pacing the deck and went down on the wharf to meet Mr. Lazarus when he came.

The big diamond, carefully packed in cotton, was sewed into the collar of Dave's vest, under the coat-collar in the back.

He had stood over the tailor while it was sewed in, the man never dreaming what the package contained.

It gave both coat and vest rather a peculiar set about the neck, but still it was not noticeable and it was the best place Dave could devise.

In the bottom of his heart Dave believed that Gordon Winstanley had stolen the Star of the West down in Brazil.

When he found that he was going to that country it occurred to him that he might hear more of it down there. At any rate, he could as easily sell the diamond in Para as in New York, so he determined to keep his secret and take the stone along.

For the remainder of the hour Dave paced the pier with ever-increasing anxiety, for Mr. Lazarus did not appear.

The steamer was now just about to sail, and here was Dave with a pocketful of money and a ticket for Brazil, but with no sort of idea what he was going to do when he reached Para. Certainly it was very strange.

If he did not appear by sailing-time, then what was Dave to do?

He had already decided that point. He would go, anyhow; he had money enough for his return ticket and his instructions could be cabled to him.

"All ashore that's going ashore!" shouted the mate from the steamer's deck.

That meant all aboard for Dave, and he was just starting up the gangplank when a cab dashed furiously down the wharf and Mr. Lazarus sprang out.

He seemed greatly excited, and his face lighted up when he saw Dave.

"Lucky you are here," he said, in his broken English; "there's no time to go aboard now. Take this box, Dave. It contains \$50,000 worth of diamonds, which you are to deliver to the address inside. There are also other things in it. Don't open the box till you reach Para. Those are my positive orders. You vill find a letter inside which vill tell you just what to do."

The bell rang and the whistle blew and the City of Rio Janeiro sailed down the bay, carrying Dave and the diamond with it.

Dave was on his way to Brazil, but what he was to do when he got there he had no more idea than when he had first consented to take the trip.

CHAPTER XII.

IS THIS PEDRO OR HIS GHOST?

Dave remained on deck until the steamer passed Sandy Hook, and then went down to dinner.

Such a thing as being sea-sick never entered his head, and, although one or two passengers were at it already, and had to leave the table, Dave made a hearty meal.

There was no chance to make acquaintances, as he very soon found out, for the passengers proved to be all Brazilians, and not one of them could speak English, so Dave found himself pretty much alone.

At nine o'clock he was still on deck, for the night was charming, every star being out and the steamer now out of sight of land, cutting her way through the water with a steady motion which was very agreeable to Dave.

He had bought himself a steamer-chair and he was lying off in it, smoking a briar pipe and half dreaming, when the night-watch came on deck.

They made considerable noise about it, too, as they took their places, but Dave was not aroused until suddenly a hand was laid on his shoulder, which brought him up with a start.

"Dave! Is it you?"

"Gordon Winstanley!" gasped Dave, staring at the boy as though he had seen a ghost.

"Aft there, you lubber! What are you talking to the passengers for?" roared the mate.

"I'll see you later, Dave," whispered Gordon, and he hastily withdrew, leaving Dave in a state of high excitement, as may well be supposed.

Here was the boy from Brazil, alive, after all, and there was the boy's diamond sewed into Dave's vest-collar.

At first Dave was sorry—we must admit it. Then he was glad and he said to himself:

"Well, it's his diamond, anyway, and I don't want what don't belong to me. I'm mighty glad he escaped."

He waited around for an hour, but got no chance to speak to the boy, for the mate was a regular driver and kept his men right at it.

Several times Dave put himself in Gordon's way, but the boy never even looked at him, so at last he gave it up and, going to his stateroom, undressed and crawled into his bunk, with his vest rolled up under his pillow and Mr. Lazarus' little box lying between the mattress and the wall, where he could reach out and touch it with his hand.

Dave soon fell asleep and the next he knew he was aroused by a tapping on the stateroom door and a voice calling, in subdued tones:

"Dave! Hey, Dave! Let me in!"

Dave sprang out of the bunk, half-dazed. The call was repeated before he became quite conscious of what it meant.

Then he hastily opened the door and Gordon Winstanley, with a wary look around, slipped into the stateroom and closed the door behind him.

"You're Dave, aren't you?" he whispered. "Say, you're Dave?"

"That's who I am," replied Dave. "You knew me, but you have changed. Upon my word, I should have hardly known you."

"It's the fits," replied Gordon. "They have been terrible bad since that night. I know I am getting thin and that my face is all screwed out of shape. I'm in a bad way, Dave. I don't believe I am long for this world. Can I stay here if not caught?"

Dave got up and bolted the door, which, let it be understood, opened on the deck, as is the case with all staterooms on the steamers plying between New York and the tropics.

"Now we are safe," he said. "How did you escape from that house? Tell me before you say another word."

"Well, that's just what I can't tell you," replied Gordon. "All I remember is seeing Pedro coming through the window. The next I knew I was in the hospital again, with my head all cut and my body terribly bruised. They thought I had been beaten and I thought so, too, till I read about the house falling down and then I didn't know what to think."

"Strange!" mused Dave. "Where was it you were found?"

"Oh, down on West street, prowling around the docks. After I got out I shipped on this steamer. Had to do something for my money was all gone."

"You must have fallen clear of the ruins and picked yourself up and walked off," said Dave, and then he went on to tell Gordon all about the fall of the house.

It is unnecessary to say that the boy listened to his story with intense eagerness.

"So Pedro is dead—actually dead!" he said. "Oh, I am so thankful! And where is the diamond now, Dave?"

"I've got it. I have been keeping it for you."

"And you are going to Brazil. Strange—very, very strange."

"Yes, I am going down to Para on a little business," replied Dave. "Shall I give you the diamond or shall I keep it for you till we get to Para?"

"Keep it, keep it," replied Gordon, hurriedly. "I wouldn't take it for anything. It would be as much as my life is worth. The crew are a hard lot and if they once suspected that I had such a thing about me there is no telling what might happen. Where is the diamond now?"

"Sewed up in the lining of my vest," replied Dave, and he had scarcely spoken the words when a queer noise at the sliding window shutter attracted the attention of both the boys.

"What was that?" whispered Gordon. "Hush! There is some one outside there!"

Now, the sash was not closed, for the night was warm, and as Dave had neglected to bolt the shutter it was an easy matter to pull it aside and at the same instant some one did this and a dark, evil face peered for a single second into the stateroom.

"Pedro!" gasped Dave.

Gordon gave the same wild cry and fell to the floor, face downward, in a fit.

CHAPTER XIII.

TALKING ABOUT THE DIAMOND.

Dave found himself with his hands full once more.

It was the same old business. Here was Pedro, or his ghost, looking in at the window again, and here was the boy from Brazil tumbling down in a fit just as before; so it is not at all surprising that for an instant Dave did not know what to do.

"This fellow has come out of his fits every time, and I guess he will come out of this," thought Dave. "If that was a dead man's face at the window I want to know it—that's all!"

He sprang over Gordon's writhing body and threw open the stateroom door.

It was a clear, starlight night—no difficulty in seeing the man if he had been there, but he was not—there was no one there at all.

Still it was not safe to say that no one had been there, for the man might have dodged into the cabin through a passageway on the right or by another on the left, or he might have run around to the stern and got on the other side. There were a dozen ways of taking himself off in a hurry, either one of which would have worked.

The strangest part of it all was that Dave could not remember seeing any such person about the steamer since it sailed.

Unless he wished to draw attention to himself, there was no use in trying to make a search then, so Dave returned to the stateroom and, carefully locking both door and window, gave himself up to the attempt to bring poor Gordon Winstanley back to himself.

Being altogether a level-headed fellow, Dave went about it in a sensible way.

Gordon was writhing and twisting and foaming at the mouth.

Dave lifted him up slightly and got a pillow under his head. Then he unbuttoned his shirt, took off his coat and pulled the shirt off over his head.

Taking a towel he saturated it with water in the water-pitcher and rubbed the boy's face, back and chest vigorously.

This stopped the twisting and the moaning. Gordon now lay perfectly still and apparently dead.

Dave threw aside the towel and, kneeling down, rubbed him vigorously with his hands, which soon finished the

business, for all at once Gordon sat up and began staring about the stateroom.

Dave said nothing. He had once been told by a doctor that rubbing was the best way to treat an epileptic, and that great care should be observed to keep perfectly quiet and not to talk much when the patient first came out of the fit.

Gordon did not say a word until after he was fully dressed.

Then he sat down on a stool and stared at Dave.

"I thought you told me he was dead," he remarked. "I thought you told me he was dead?"

"So I did. Pedro is dead. I saw his dead body in the yard back of the house in Laurens street, and I saw it again in the station-house. I know he is dead."

"Do you believe in ghosts, Dave?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, I do. I believe that was Pedro's ghost. Don't give me back that diamond. I wouldn't take it for anything. I tell you what I'll do with you, Dave."

"What?"

"You keep the diamond. You know all about diamonds, anyway, and I don't. Keep it until we get to Para, and then try and sell it for whatever it will fetch, and whack up with me."

"I agree to that. On what terms?"

"Halves."

"Liberal, and all right. It's a bargain, is it, Gordon?"

"It's a bargain."

"Then look here, don't you worry any more about Pedro. If he's alive and on this steamer I'll take care of him. If he's a ghost and haunting us, I'll take care of him, too, so don't go tumbling into another fit if he happens to look in on us again. And now I want you to tell me your story. I must know in what mysterious way you got this diamond? I want to understand, if I can, what all this means."

"Why, there is nothing mysterious about it," replied Gordon. "I'll tell you how I got the diamond if you want to know."

"You bet I do."

"Well, then, it was this way: When I was in Para last time I was taken down with the yellow fever and was sent to the hospital. After I began to get well, as I hadn't paid anything, they made me put in two months' work there. One day a man was brought in very low with the fever. He was an Englishman and a sailor. He told me his name was Charles Thayer, and that he had been up into the Parano River country, north of Para, on a native boat after a load of cocoanuts, and there he got the fever. He was a decent sort of fellow, and I did all I could for him, but he was too far gone to be saved, and the night he died he gave me the diamond and told me that an Indian gave it to him first, and then, just as he was going, he opened his eyes and said: 'Boy, I lied to you. I stole the diamond out of an Indian temple or joss-house, or whatever you call it. It was the eye of a big wooden idol, and nothing but bad luck has followed me ever since. Look out you don't get your share of it, for, as true as I live, that big diamond is an unlucky stone.'"

"Is that all?" asked Dave, as Gordon paused.

"Well, he died then, and I did strike bad luck for fair."

"How?"

"Oh, every way. I was sent away from the hospital and couldn't get a ship. I came mighty near starving to death there in Para."

"What else?"

"Well, I fell down in a fit and broke my arm and had to go back to the hospital again. I got a ship pretty soon after I got out that time and came to New York."

"That's all bad luck, to be sure, but I don't see what it has to do with the diamond."

"You don't, but I do. If you had been in my place and had that man Pedro following you about the way he followed me you would understand."

"Ah! now we are getting down to business. This is where Pedro comes in," exclaimed Dave. "Go on, Gordon; I'm getting interested now."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POISONED CIGAR.

Gordon's story about Pedro was rather a long one, and not by any means as interesting as Dave had hoped.

It appeared that the English sailor boy tried to sell the diamond to a Jew in Para, who offered him such a small sum for it that he immediately got out of his store and made up his mind that he would not try to sell the stone until he reached New York.

That night he was pounced upon in the street and the clothes nearly torn off of him in the search for the diamond, which he had left in his room.

The man who attacked him was Pedro, and five different times he was attacked again in the same way, and all within a week.

At the end of the week Gordon sailed on the Anglo-Saxon. Naturally, he supposed that he had left Pedro behind him, and he was terribly startled when he saw the fellow's ugly face looking in at him through Mr. Gompers' rear window in New York.

This ended all Gordon had to tell, and did not explain Pedro's position in regard to the diamond very clearly.

After Gordon left the stateroom Dave lay awake until morning, thinking about it all, but he did not get much light on the mystery, nor did much come to him during the days that followed.

One thing seemed absolutely certain. There was no man in any way answering the description of Pedro on board the steamer, but there was a man who gave Dave a good deal of concern, just the same.

This was a tall, slim Englishman, with tow-colored side-whiskers and a blond mustache, who occupied the stateroom next to Dave.

His name was Mr. J. Herbert Stukely, so he said.

He was going down to Para to buy rubber, so he declared.

He was extremely near-sighted and rather deaf, so he asserted.

But Dave did not believe one word of it all, for he caught Mr. Stukely listening at his window and peering through a crack in the partition which divided the two staterooms. And at all times, in season and out, he persisted in trying to force his company upon Dave.

One evening, when the City of Rio was supposed to be well down on the coast of Brazil, and rapidly nearing her destination, matters came to a climax between Mr. Stukely and Dave.

It had been intensely hot all day—such heat as is only felt at sea in the tropics—and now that night had fallen the heat still continued, and the sky wore that peculiar greenish shade which means a hurricane to the eyes of the old salt.

At ten o'clock Dave was lying back in his steamer chair on deck, half asleep.

He was waiting up for Gordon to be relieved, intending to go down into the stateroom with the boy and have a talk.

At quarter-past ten Mr. Stukely came along and planted himself in a vacant chair alongside of Dave, as he often did.

"Fine evening, Mr. Hartwell?" he said.

"I don't know," growled Dave, sleepily. "I heard the mate say a while ago that we were running on an even line with a big storm."

"So? Well, let her come. By the way, what hotel are you going to in Para? I understand we are in the mouth of the

Amazon River now. We ought to be in by daylight. That's the captain's talk."

"Yes," said Dave, closing his eyes. "All right."

"But you didn't mention your hotel, Mr. Hartwell," continued Stukely, in a very offensive way.

"No, I didn't," said Dave; "and, what's more, I don't intend to."

"Beg pardon!"

"I said I didn't intend to!" cried Dave, raising his voice.

"Dear me! How very rude you are!" drawled Stukely. "If I have said anything to offend, I beg pardon, I am suah!"

Dave sat up in his chair and faced the man, saying:

"Mr. Stukely, you have been annoying me the whole voyage by trying to pry into my business. Now, once and for all——"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Stukely. "Don't get mad. It's too hot altogether to get excited. I'm sure I didn't intend any offence, young man. Won't you join me in a cigar?"

This, perhaps, made the twentieth time that Mr. Stukely had offered Dave a cigar.

But our hero was not much of a smoker, so he had always declined.

Now it seemed as if he could not do so without keeping up the quarrel, which he did not care to do. So he took the offered cigar and accepted the light which followed it, and lying back in his chair began puffing away.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Stukely, lighting a weed himself, which he carefully examined before putting in his mouth. "There, Mr. Hartwell, this is more like being sociable than anything I have struck yet on this blessed old tub. Why, everybody seems to be afraid of everybody else and—how does that cigar suit you, my dear sir? If it is too strong, try another. I have some milder ones in the other pocket of my vest."

"It is strong, but I guess I can smoke it," replied Dave, dreamily.

He felt very, very sleepy. It had come over him all at once.

Mr. Stukely chattered away about nothing, in the same drawling manner. His voice alone was enough to put anybody to sleep, Dave thought, and then as he tried to listen and fix his thoughts upon what the man was saying it seemed to Dave that he was asleep and dreaming as he lay there in the chair.

Such a strange dream, too!

Mr. J. Herbert Stukely seemed to be changing into the man Pedro.

Dave saw him put up his hand to his face and there he was without the side-whiskers and the tow-colored mustache.

Then he put up his hand to his head, and there he was without the flaxen hair which hung down almost to his coat-collar.

It seemed to Dave now, then, that he was looking at the man who had been shot by Pedro in the room of the house in Neilson place.

But no! That was surely a mistake.

It was Pedro himself.

There he sat, glaring at Dave.

It was all a dream, of course, but what had become of Mr. Stukely? How did Pedro get into that chair?

Dave thought he saw him look vastly assured, and then all

at once he turned and pounced on him, clutching him by the throat.

"Where is the diamond?" he hissed in his ear. "Where is the diamond, boy?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE TIDAL WAVE.

This was the critical point in Dave's dream.

It seemed to him as though he had to tell this man, just as if some strange power forced him to obey.

If Dave had known more of poisons than he did he would have understood that the cigar had been doctored with a well-known East Indian drug, the effect of which is to destroy the will and blunt the senses.

It is said that a man under its influence will do whatever he is told to do, providing the one who gives the command is a person of strong will.

Dave had got a full dose. He was completely under the influence of the drug, the effect of which is but short-lived; in fact, he was over-dosed, and that is just where the man made a mistake.

"Confound it all! I loaded the cigar too strong," he muttered. "I've put him to sleep. No help for it now but to wait a bit. The boy can't answer me, and that's right."

It was indeed so. Dave's senses had completely left him. He was not even dreaming now; he was sound asleep.

The man, with another wary look around, began feeling him all over.

Evidently he suspected the truth and thought that the diamond was concealed somewhere about his clothes.

Meanwhile, something was going on out on the ocean and in the air overhead which was causing the officers and crew of the City of Rio Janeiro the deepest concern.

It was an old-fashioned Brazilian hurricane of the worst kind.

The captain was on the bridge roaring to the mate, and the mate was roaring to the men, and the few passengers on board were all asleep, either on deck or below, except the man who had gone by the name of Stukely, and he was so busy working over Dave that he did not realize why it got so dark all at once, and what all this shouting meant.

"I've got it!" he hissed at last. "Here it is in his coat-collar! One twist of the knife and the Star of the West is mine!"

Then he shot another look about the deck, and for the first time realized what was coming.

The sailors were running this way and that, the captain was bawling from the bridge and the mate swearing about the deck.

"I daren't tackle him here," muttered the man. "Thunder! It's going to blow in a minute! What in the world shall I do? Oh, if that stuff would only let go!"

His wish was granted. Already Dave had begun to dream again.

He dreamed that he felt sick at his stomach and got up out of the chair.

Supporting Dave, Stukely then hurried to the stairway which led down to the main deck.

He had scarcely reached it when the hurricane struck the steamer, and behind the hurricane came a tidal wave.

The force was tremendous, beyond all telling, even. The frightened officers had not dreamed of anything like this.

In an instant everything movable on the deck of the City of Rio Janeiro was swept into the sea, and the mate and half the crew went with the rest, for the steamer's rail went over as though it was made of pie-crust, giving full play to the wall of water which came with the wind, breaking over the ill-fated steamer, now on its beam ends, laboring in the trough of the sea.

Dave and Mr. Stukely just escaped.

The wind struck them and threw them down, the wave struck them and washed them to the stairway between decks, near which they stood.

Dave went down head-first, followed by an immense volume of water, which brought Stukely down with it, and on top of him.

It was a wonder that both were not drowned. As it was, they were thrown against the lower railing with fearful force.

Here was violent treatment to counteract the effects of the doctored cigar!

It did it most completely, however.

All in an instant Dave was himself again.

He sprang to his feet and staggered against the rail, wondering what it all meant.

The City of Rio Janeiro was now on her beam ends, the water which had been shipped went rushing past Dave and it swept the man Stukely hard against his legs.

"Great heavens! This is the end of everything, I guess!" gasped Dave. "Hello! Who is this?"

He stooped down and, clutching the drowning man by the collar, pulled him to his feet.

"Pedro!" he exclaimed.

"Dave! Dave! Are you there, Dave?"

It was Gordon calling.

Down the stairs he came tumbling. With the greatest difficulty he had managed to reach Dave.

The brave fellow thought Dave was in his stateroom, and he was determined to save him, even at the risk of his own life.

"Here I am! Help me hold him!" cried Dave. "It's Pedro, or his ghost, and I think he is dead!"

The man's head hung down and he leaned a dead weight against Dave.

Gordon gave a quick gasp, took another step and yelled, in a fearful voice:

"Pedro! It's the diamond's work!"

Then he came pitching down the rest of the stairs, head-first, and landed at Dave's feet, all in a heap.

"In a fit again!" gasped Dave. "I've got two of them on my hands now, and this old tub of a steamer is bound for the bottom, sure!"

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER THE STORM.

Following the first rush of wind and the tidal wave which brought disaster to that worn-out old steamer, the City of Rio Janeiro, came a regular good, old-fashioned tropical hurricane, which blew for half an hour or more.

The steamer was not on the ocean, as one might have supposed from the fact that she was out of sight of land.

Actually, she was just entering the mouth of the Amazon River, where the width of that mighty stream is so vast that any one would naturally suppose themselves to be away out at sea.

The accident to the crew had completely demoralized every one on board, captain included.

The doom of the steamer seemed sealed, and its commander, who was a weak man at all times, showed himself to be a coward now.

He ordered the starboard boat launched, and, with the engineer, fireman, steward and the few members of the crew who had escaped the tidal wave, put off from the sinking craft without even making an effort to save the passengers, and yet there were only seven of these all told, and no women on the list.

Thus Dave was deserted and did not know it.

The brave fellow had his hands full and was doing his best, as he always did.

The water ran off through the scuppers and left the deck comparatively dry where Dave stood.

"I must save them if I can," he thought. "I believe we are sinking, though."

He stooped down over Gordon and dragged him to the stateroom and with a great effort got him into the lower berth.

Then he pocketed certain articles which he actually needed and was ready for the stranger who had served him such a bad turn.

The diamond box belonging to Lazarus & Wertheimer he had already put in his pocket, for he had never allowed it to go out of his possession since Mr. Lazarus gave it to him on the pier.

Hurrying back to where he had left the stranger, Dave, in a dim sort of way, realized that he had been drugged.

But the shock of the storm had almost entirely restored him to his senses, and with their return he seemed to lose all recollection of what had happened while he was under the influence of the drug.

All he knew was that the cigar had made him very sick, and that now he felt all right again and was in the greatest danger. The latter fact was pretty firmly impressed on his mind as he bent over the man who so strongly resembled the dead Pedro and tried to raise him up.

And Dave had his hands full, but he was still able to accomplish it.

The man had partially revived; he was moaning piteously. There was a terrible scalp wound right over the left temple and his face was all covered with blood.

"Save me! Save me! Oh, save me!" he kept saying, over and over again.

Altogether, it was a fine pair of patients that poor Dave had on his hands!

"Come to my stateroom," he said. "You can lie on the floor there. This way. Keep cool and I'll see what can be done. Come on! Come on!"

Supporting the man whom, let it be understood, he did not at all connect with Mr. Stukely, Dave led the way to the stateroom, and when he laid him down on the floor and put a pillow under his head the brave boy started for the deck to find out how it stood with the steamer and what was best to do.

It was all he could do to reach the stairs; the wind kept blowing him against the partition, and when he did get to the deck he had to drop on his hands and knees or he would have been instantly swept into the heaving sea through the break in the rail.

Further on he saw three of the passengers—all native Brazilians—trying to let down one of the boats.

The boat was hanging to the davits and they were in it "fussing" with the tackle, which they did not seem to understand.

"There are three more to come!" yelled Dave. "Don't leave us!"

He had scarcely spoken when another fearful gust struck the steamer, laying her away over on her side again.

Dave got hold of the railing which guarded the top of the stairs and held on for dear life.

It was so dark that he could not see the boat now, but it seemed to him that he could hear shouts for help over in that direction.

A moment more and the steamer righted.

Dave caught his breath as he looked ahead.

The boat was empty! The Brazilians had been washed away!

"I must get back to the stateroom," thought Dave. "I can do nothing whatever here."

He started to descend the stairs, and this proved to be a most dangerous matter, but he had almost gained the lower deck when the next gust struck the ill-fated craft.

Over she went again, and this time masts, smokestack, deck-house and everything above was carried away.

As for Dave, he was off his feet in an instant and came down heavily on his back on the stairs, tumbling to the deck below and striking his head with such force that it was a wonder he had not cracked his skull.

It was all over for the time being.

Consciousness left the boy, and when the battered hulk slowly righted, Dave rolled over against the guards, like one dead.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAST OF THE STEAMER.

Dave had made a brave fight for it and had been knocked out, and if the City of Rio Janeiro had gone to the bottom

then he would most undoubtedly have gone with it, but, as luck went, a few minutes later the storm blew over and the stars came out again.

The wind died away as rapidly as it had risen and the sea soon became as smooth as it had been when Dave first began talking with Mr. Stukely, which was the beginning of all these troubles, and still the boy lay there at the foot of the stairs entirely unconscious of all that was going on around him until all at once he heard a voice calling in his ear as though it came from a great distance:

"Dave! Dave! Dave! Dave!"

It seemed to bring Dave back to life again.

He opened his eyes to find Gordon bending over him shouting his name in his ear.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, sitting up. "What has happened? Are we sinking? Where have I been?"

Dave staggered to his feet. The first thing that caught his eye was the stars shining, then he saw mountains rising in the distance, and right there, close to the steamer, was land lying long and low and covered with a dense tropical forest.

And this was the way that Dave got his first sight of Brazil.

"No, you are not dreaming. It is really land. The hurricane has blown us in shore," said Gordon, reading his thoughts.

"Is it Para?" gasped Dave.

"Para? No, indeed! Goodness knows what part of the country we have struck. Are you able to go on deck, Dave? Can you listen to me?"

"Sure! Why not? My head aches, but I'm all right."

"It's lucky you are, and lucky that I came out of my fit when I did, for everything else is all wrong," Gordon hastily replied. "Dave, there's a dying man in your stateroom, and there will be two more here in a minute if we don't get a boat out. This old tub is sinking and may go down any instant—do you understand?"

While speaking, Gordon had helped Dave on deck.

The desolation was awful to look at; the steamer lay low in the water, and seemed to be settling still lower. Dave saw at a glance that Gordon's words were true.

"Where's the captain? Where are the crew and the passengers?" he gasped.

"Give it up!" said Gordon. "They are all gone. Except that man and ourselves there isn't a blessed soul on this steamer, and I tell you again we have got to get off mighty sudden if we expect to live."

"We'll let down that boat," said Dave, pointing to the only boat which remained.

"That's the talk; but how will we get him in?"

"That man?"

"Yes."

"Pedro?"

"Pedro be hanged! He's not Pedro! Why, Dave, when I came out of my fit I went for him. I thought it was really Pedro, and—well, there's no time for long yarns now. His wig and his whiskers came off in my hands. He was fixed up to look like Pedro, all right, but I'll tell you who he is."

"Who?"

"That fresh fellow, Stukely, who was always cruising around you."

"By thunder! You are right, Gordon!" cried Dave. "I remember all now. It was he who gave me that cigar. It's the diamond! Has he got it? No! Here it is!"

Dave clapped his hand to his coat-collar and could feel the lump. Then he felt of his inside pocket and found Mr. Lazarus' box all safe.

"We will drop the boat," said Gordon, "and we will get him into it. We will talk these things over later on. What we want to do now is to get ashore before this old tub goes to Davy Jones."

Dave saw plainly enough that Gordon had good cause to be anxious. The steamer had settled even since they came on deck.

The boys hurried to the davits and, with Dave's help, Gordon was soon able to drop the boat, going down with it himself.

There were no oars, for they had been washed away, so Gordon broke out one of the seats and declared that he could paddle ashore with that. "I'll get round by the stateroom, Dave!" he called. "Throw me a line there and make the boat fast; then I'll come aboard and help you get him in."

"Blest if I see how we are going to do it," said Dave. "But this is your racket, Gordon. I'll do whatever you say."

He hurried to the main deck, forward, where, as Gordon told him, he found rope of various kinds, and, as luck would have it, a spare pair of oars was discovered, too, and with these things Dave hurried to the stateroom, where, glancing in, he could see the man still lying on the floor.

He was groaning as though in great pain. It was too dark for Dave to get much of a look at his face, and he did not try, for there was Gordon and the boat to think of.

"Are you there, Gordon?" he sang out, looking over the rail, "Right here, Dave!"

"Great Scott! We are almost on a level with the boat!"

"Well, that's what!" replied Gordon, standing up in the boat, his head projecting over the guards.

"Hello! Oars! Bully for you!" he shouted. "Didn't think there were any down there. Give me the line! Make t'other end fast to the stateroom door and have your knife ready to cut it on the instant if she sinks all of a sudden, which she is bound to do when her time comes."

"Why, we are not moving! The engine has stopped!" cried Dave.

"Certainly. Didn't you realize that before? The water put the fire under the boilers out of business long ago. Now we are right. Here I come!"

Gordon seized the guard-rail and vaulted lightly over it.

"Now we have got to lift that fellow up and drop him into the boat," he said. "Lend me a hand, Dave. He's a crook, whoever he is, and he's one of the gang that's after the diamond. We ought to drop him overboard—that's what we ought to do."

They lifted him off the stateroom floor, then, and it was all they could do, for the man was a pretty good weight.

For a moment they rested him upon the rail, but they did not have long to wait before the boat was almost on a level.

"The water will be over the guards in two shakes!" cried Gordon. "In with him, Dave! The old tub is going down right now, and it will carry us with it if we don't look spry!"

No time was lost in getting aboard after the man was laid in the bottom of the boat.

Gordon cast off and, seizing the oars, pulled rapidly away from the sinking steamer.

He was not one instant too soon, for they were scarcely well clear of her when all at once the City of Rio Janeiro began settling with great rapidity.

"There she goes!" cried Gordon, and go she did, the suction almost carrying the boat down, too.

Then the whirling water grew quiet again and the boat, with Dave and Gordon and the unconscious man, glided shoreward, alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"PULL AWAY QUICK OR WE ARE LOST!"

Gordon was a splendid hand at the oars. He pulled with great steadiness and never seemed to tire. During that row the boys discussed the situation and Gordon learned all that Dave had to tell.

"I wonder who he can be?" he said. "I suspected from the first that he was after the diamond when you told me about his looking in at you through that crack in the partition. Then that disguise! Well, he did look like Pedro, but he can't come it again. He won't frighten me into fits any more."

"Don't have the fits," said Dave. "You'll kill yourself some day the way you fall. You came pretty near it when you tumbled down those stairs. Tell me how you feel when they are first coming on?"

"Why," said Gordon, "all I can remember of that one is seeing Pedro, as I supposed, standing there, and the next I knew I woke up in your berth. It's no use to ask me to describe my feelings. I never could."

"I can tell you how I feel, though," said a dismal voice down in the bottom of the boat. "I'm in pain from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I think I am going to die."

It was "Stukely." He had found his voice at last.

Neither Dave nor Gordon answered him.

Gordon gave a shudder as he spoke, and pulled all the harder. As for Dave, for the moment he did not know what to say.

"Afraid of me, Dave Hartwell?" continued the man. "Well, you needn't be any longer. I'm past alarming you now. I shall never get the diamond. The Star of the West is as safe from me there sewed in the collar of your coat as if it was a thousand miles away."

"You seem to know me and the diamond well enough," said Dave, "but I don't know you. All the same, you are a

suffering man, and perhaps, as you say, a dying man, so if there is anything that I can do to make you more comfortable I am ready to do it, and——"

"And you have already done it, my boy; you have already done it, in spite of what I did to you," replied the man, in a steadier voice. "So you don't know me? Well, it is not strange. You have seen me before, but you have never seen my face undisguised since we met on that infernal steamer. I am no more Stukely than I am Pedro, but I am the man who saw you in Mr. Gompers' store on Maiden Lane on the day the Star of the West was changed for a piece of glass right under my very nose by that slick thief, Irene Duchenelle."

"What!" cried Dave. "Is it you? You are the man Pedro shot in that house in Neilson place, then?"

"I am. I've been hunting the Star of the West for ten years, Dave. It is hard to have the prize snatched out of my hand just as it is within my grasp."

"Who are you?" cried Dave. "Tell me your name! Tell me why——"

"Why I was so anxious to get hold of that fatal stone?" broke in the man. "Well, that's my business. I am a detective. My name is Percy Howard. I am in the employ of the King of Holland. As I said before, for ten years past I have had no other business than to hunt for the Star of the West. I know I would never succeed. I felt it from the first, and now it is coming true. Well, I have outlived Pedro, anyhow, and who knows but I may pull through. Where are we now? Raise me up, boy! I know this coast well. You thought I was unconscious, but I wasn't. I knew what was going on all the time, although I could not speak. You're a brave and honest fellow, Dave Hartwell, and you will be rewarded. Boy, I can put you in the way of getting full value for that stone."

"It's his; not mine," replied Dave, pointing to Gordon.

"I wouldn't touch it with tongs," muttered the sailor boy. "It will get us into trouble yet."

"Raise me up, Dave! Raise me up!" repeated the detective. "I want to see where we are. It's getting lighter now and we are almost inshore."

Dave got his arm under the detective and, with some difficulty, managed to raise him up in the boat.

Morning was just dawning. The beach lay right before them, and back of that stretched the dense, tropical forest, extending in both directions as far as the eye could reach.

There was not a break anywhere, as far as Dave could see, but for all that there was something about it to startle the detective, for he gave a sharp cry, exclaiming:

"The House of the Diamond God! Heavens! this is indeed fate! Pull away, boys! Pull away quick or we are lost!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOUSE OF THE DIAMOND GOD.

"We can't pull away now," said Gordon. "Look at the rollers further along the beach. Where the bank overhangs they

break with fearful force; no boat could live in them for an instant. We have got to land right ahead here in that cove."

If Gordon was addressing his remarks to Dave it was all right, but if he expected the detective to hear them he was making a big mistake, for when they came to look at the man they found that he had fainted dead away and he was entirely unconscious of his surroundings for the next ten minutes.

"I don't understand what he was talking about, Gordon," said Dave. "Do you?"

"No, indeed, I don't. I never was in this place before," replied Gordon. "Still, it can't be a great way from Para."

"It wouldn't surprise me if this was the mouth of a river. See, the cove does not end here, as I supposed it did. It keeps right on up into the country, and there is a regular current."

"That's what there is," replied Gordon. "I wonder if it can be the Parano River where the diamond came from?"

"It wouldn't surprise me. What did he mean by calling out 'the House of the Diamond God?' I see no house at all."

"Nor I. Is he coming to, or is he dead?"

"Oh, I don't think he is dead," said Dave. "He'll come to all right again. Shall we pull right inshore in spite of what he said?"

"We have got to. We can't help ourselves. If we get caught in one of these rollers we are gone."

"Go right ahead, then. I'm not going to let what he said scare me. We have been through too much. I think the man is off his base."

So Gordon pulled away until they had passed at least half a mile up the river, for a river it proved to be.

Meanwhile, Percy Howard revived, but he seemed to be quite out of his mind again. He paid no attention to what the boys said to him, but kept up a constant moaning. Dave came to the conclusion that he was probably going to die.

It was intensely hot, now that the sun was beginning to get high, the river was narrowing down, both banks were lined with the dense tropical forest for which Brazil is so famous; great palms grew close down to the water's edge. Enormous trees of unknown species towered far above the rest here and there, but not a trace of human habitation could be seen.

Strange sounds were all around the boys as they rowed on. Monkeys chattered and parrots screamed, and there were shrill whistling cries and every now and then fierce roars were heard among the trees.

"Sounds as if there was a perfect menagerie in there," said Dave. "What a wonderful country! Is Brazil all like this?"

"Pretty much wherever there is no settlement. You would have to look a good while to find a place where there wasn't monkeys and cocoanut trees; but say, Dave, we want to get this man in out of the sun as quick as ever we can; if we don't he is going to die on our hands."

"I don't see any place where we can make a landing," replied Dave. "It seems to be all swamp, as near as I can make out."

"Let's pull on around that point ahead on the right. We may get a better show."

Gordon continued to work the oars vigorously. He knew just

how to handle them, and it seemed as though he would never tire.

In a few moments they rounded the point and both boys broke out with exclamations of surprise.

They had run right into a native town.

Scattered along the shore was a row of huts large and small, with one big frame building larger than all the rest put together rising in the midst.

In front of the town a rude wharf projected out into the river, and moored to it was a small steamer with "Amazonas Para" painted across her stern.

"The old Amazonas!" cried Gordon. "I know where we are now!"

"Where?" demanded Dave.

Before Gordon could answer the detective suddenly raised himself and sat up in the boat.

"It is Paruno!" he cried. "You would come here. Well, well, it can't be helped. It is fate! There it is! There's where I stole the Star of the West from the eye of the idol! That's the house of the Diamond God!"

He pointed to the big building which rose above the rest, and he kept on pointing at it, muttering to himself, and no intelligent word could be got out of him. He did not seem to realize who the boys were. At last he lay down again and seemed to drop off asleep.

"There's going to be trouble, Dave!" said Gordon. "The diamond is at its old work again."

"I believe you! What do you say if we give it back to these people?"

"Blest if I care if it comes around right. I've had enough of it, Dave. All I want to do is to get away from the old thing; but say, we must go slow or we will find ourselves in trouble before we know it. These Paruno Indians are said to be terrible fellows; they are not Christians, you know, and don't acknowledge the authority of the Brazilian government. They have their own king and still worship their idols, just as they used to do in old times."

"I'd like to see some of them once," said Dave. "There doesn't seem to be a living thing about except the monkeys, and the trees are chock full of them."

Indeed, it proved to be just that way; the village was quite deserted, and it was just the same with the steamer.

The boys ran the boat close alongside and shouted, again and again, but no one answered.

"We had better take a look about before we try to move him," said Gordon, looking at the detective, who was still sleeping. "Shall we leave him here?"

"Yes. I'll throw my coat over him to keep the flies off his face. I tell you, there's no one here. Do you suppose if there was some of the people would not have been down to see who we were before this?"

They pulled the boat high up upon the sand and walked among the huts toward the big building, now at no great distance away.

Not a dog barked, not a soul was to be seen anywhere. Yet there was everything to show that the place was inhabited.

Reaching the building, the boys ascended the steps and pushed open the bamboo door.

An immense empty space opened before them.

It was so dark inside that for a moment the boys could not make out what was there, but as their eyes grew accustomed to the dimness they saw that at the back of the long room a sort of platform rose four or five feet above the floor.

That was all.

If this was really the house of the Diamond God, then it was an empty house, like all the rest.

Surely there could be nothing to fear in a town which they had all to themselves.

"Let's get back to the boat and take a look at the steamer," said Dave. "Of all the queer freaks the diamond has played us yet this bringing us here to this deserted town is the queerest."

CHAPTER XX.

THE OPENING OF THE SEALED PACKET.

When Dave and Gordon went aboard the Amazonas they found everything in good order, but, as was the case with the town, there was not a soul to be seen, cabin, engine-room, captain's quarters and galley being, all alike, deserted.

It was certainly a queer state of affairs, but the boys were disposed to make the best of it, and they immediately returned to the boat and, rousing up the detective, managed to get life enough into him to go ashore and walk to the wharf, from which, with some difficulty, they succeeded in getting him on board the Amazonas, where they laid him down in one of the deck berths and threw a big fly-net over him, then leaving him there to continue his sleep in peace.

During the walk, Percy Howard said but little, but from the way he stared about he seemed to know the place.

Once he waved his hand toward the big house, exclaiming: "That's it! That's it! That's where the diamond came from, and it will go back there, too."

Then, just as he lay back in the bunk, he suddenly asked:

"Where's Pedro?" and then, in the same breath, said: "Oh, I remember! He's dead. He used to live here."

"If he could only speak out we would soon know all about the diamond," said Gordon, when they went out on the deck.

"Yes, but he can't, and I don't believe he ever will again," replied Dave. "Gordon, sit down here under the awning. I'm in a quandary. I don't know just what to do."

"Well, what I was going to do was to look for some grub," replied Gordon. "I'm as hungry as a bear."

"It's too hot to eat. I'm fearfully dry, though. I suppose there's no chance of getting anything to drink."

"If we explore a bit we may find that there is."

"Not now! Not now! I want to have a little talk about my affairs, Gordon. Do you suppose we shall ever get to Para?"

"Mighty hard to say. Doesn't look as though there was going to be anything to prevent us; here we are on board of

the Para steamer. If we can only stay here we shall fetch up sooner or later at the mouth of the Amazon, sure."

"Well, it may be so, but I think I'm justified in opening this box Mr. Lazarus gave me now. I ought to know what my instructions are, for no one can tell what may happen to us. I'm going to do it, Gordon, and I want you to be a witness in case trouble comes."

"That's all right. I'd open it blame quick if it was me," replied Gordon, to whom Dave had fully explained the situation during the voyage.

Dave had the box with him; he had never let it get far away since they took to the boat.

Now, with some reluctance, he broke the seals and tore off the wrapper. It was an easy matter to open the box then, for it was not fastened in any way.

Inside were two smaller boxes, and a sealed letter addressed to Dave himself, and another one besides.

Dave tore open the letter and read as follows:

"DAVE:—I meant to tell you all about this business, but I have been delayed, and if I catch you before the steamer sails I shall be lucky, so I can only write.

"Take these two boxes and deliver them to Captain Lorenzo Marques, of the steamer Amazonas. He will give you a receipt for them. That is all you have got to do with the matter. After that, report to Messrs. Heilburger & Hentz, No. 80 Madison street, Para. They will supply you with all the money you need and give you every instruction. You are then to proceed to the diamond district back of Pernambuco and buy for us stones as follows:"

Here came a long list of shapes, weights and dimensions of diamonds which the firm desired Dave to purchase on their account.

Dave was thrown into a great state of excitement. It raised himself in his own estimation a hundred per cent., for that Mr. Lazarus should consider him possessed of a good enough knowledge of diamonds to make these purchases was a compliment indeed.

"Let's have a look at the diamonds, Dave," said Gordon, who had been waiting patiently while Dave read all this.

Dave opened the first box, and there, lying in cotton, was an object which made Gordon jump off his seat.

"The big diamond!" he cried. "It is the Star of the West! How in the world——"

"Hold on!" said Dave. "That's no diamond. It's nothing but a piece of glass."

"You don't mean it!"

"I certainly do. Strange that my orders should be to deliver it to the captain of this very steamer. It is just as the detective says. It is fate."

"Hello! Look! look!" cried Gordon. "There come the people at last!"

Over toward the forest beyond the town a long procession of men, women and children were filing down the side of a little hill. Behind them was an ox-wagon, with great solid wooden wheels, upon which rested a huge, glittering idol,

shaped like a man eight feet high or more, carved out of a solid tree-trunk, as the boys afterward learned.

There were dozens of naked children running alongside the cart, and the oxen and the idol itself were decked out with ribbons and little green flags.

As this strange procession came nearer the sound of wild music was heard, and the boys could see that a native band led; they were beating drums and blowing on tin horns, kicking up a horrible din.

Behind the ox-wagon followed several men in white suits and cork helmets, but the natives wore nothing but cheap cotton undershirts and drawers, with big straw hats on their heads and in some cases it was just the straw hats and a string of beads.

"There they are!" cried Dave. "Those are the sailors behind the cart. We must get down to meet them, Gordon. I don't doubt that Captain Marques is there with the rest, and this other letter is for him."

Tying up the box the boys hastily left the steamer and walked boldly toward the advancing crowd.

They soon had reason to wish they had stayed where they were, for no sooner did the leaders of the procession catch sight of them than a wild shout went up and the procession went to pieces, like a flash.

It was every man for himself now, and every man came running pell-mell toward the boys, brandishing long spears, hooting and yelling and raising a fearful din.

"To the boat!" cried Gordon! "To the boat! Those fellows mean mischief! They'll spear us before those white men can interfere!"

CHAPTER XXI.

GORDON HAS A FIT JUST AT THE WRONG TIME.

Instead of running, Dave just stood still.

"I'm not going to do it," he said. "It's just like meeting a pack of dogs. If you run away they will tear you to pieces. The only way is to stand our ground and show them that we are not afraid. Say, Gordon, can you speak Portuguese?"

"A little," replied Gordon. "Enough to make myself understood."

"Then talk to them. Ask for Captain Marques. See, there are six white men altogether. I don't doubt that he is one."

The men in the cork helmets seemed to realize the danger the boys were in, for they came running forward, shouting to the Indians in the native language.

In a moment the boys found themselves "right in it."

The Indians proved to be less dangerous than they had threatened to be, however.

They came crowding about Dave and Gordon, jabbering away like a lot of monkeys, but not a man laid a hand upon them; instead of that they seemed to look at them admiringly and with the most intense curiosity.

To Dave and Gordon it was as if a dozen Pedros had come to life all at once, for there were many faces among the In-

dians which most strangely resembled that of the dead man. "Brace up, Gordon! Don't have a fit now, for heaven's sake!" said Dave. "Here come the sailors! They will set us right."

"Capitao Marques! Capitao Marques!" Gordon kept shouting out, and in a moment a dried-up little Brazilian elbowed his way through the crowd, followed by six others.

The Indians stood back and let them come up to the boys.

"Who are you?" he demanded, in broken English. "How came you here?"

"Is this Captain Marques?" demanded Dave, with all the calmness he could assume.

"That's my name."

"My name is Hartwell. I'm from New York. I was sent to see you by the firm of Lazarus & Wertheimer. I——"

The captain gave a sharp exclamation, and flung up both hands.

"What fortune!" he cried. "Was there ever anything like it! But what wind blew you in here to Paruno just at this time?"

"I expect it was the hurricane," replied Dave; "but here is a package for you and a letter from Mr. Lazarus. I will explain——"

"Not now! Not now!" cried the captain. "I suppose these are the diamonds?"

"Yes."

"You are just in the nick of time. Heavens, but it is wonderful! I expected you down on the last steamer, but as you did not come I thought—no matter! Give me the package, boy. We will talk business later. Is the big diamond in there?"

"Yes," replied Dave, with a peculiar twinkle of his eye.

"Ah! Say nothing," whispered the captain. "Many of these fellows understand English. They go to Para; they have picked it up there. Be careful or they will understand. Fall in behind the procession with my men. You will see what happens."

Thus saying, Captain Marques seized the package and shouted something in the native language which the boys could not make out.

The result was startling.

Deafening shouts went up all around them. The Indians began to dance and yell, and one who seemed to be the chief rushed up to Captain Marques and held out his hand.

But the captain waved him back and pointed to the "temple of the diamond god."

Then the chief looked back, shouted something, and the procession marched on toward the big house.

But the boys were not to be let off so easily.

Suddenly the Indians made a rush, and were about to seize them, when what seemed to Dave the most horrible thing that could happen did happen then and there.

Gordon started back as the rush came, flung up his arms, and, with a wild cry, fell in a fit, foaming and writhing upon the ground.

The shout that went up then was deafening—it was a shout of joy rather than rage.

As though they had been one man, the Indians made a rush for the unfortunate sailor boy.

Dave was pushed aside, and four Indians picked Gordon up, bodily, held him high above their heads, and ran with his writhing body toward the temple of the Diamond God.

"Bartamente!" cried Captain Marques. "He is as good as dead!"

CHAPTER XXII.

PRISONERS OF THE DIAMOND GOD.

The startling announcement made by Captain Marques, as the Indians bore Gordon away toward the house of the Diamond God, drove Dave half wild.

"Let me get to him! Let me get to him!" he cried. "They shan't kill that boy!"

"Hold on!" said the little captain of the Amazonas, throwing his arm out, catching Dave under the chin and forcing him back. "You won't do any good that way, boy. The only chance to save your friend is to listen to me."

But Dave was not in that mood at all.

He resented the captain's interference and started to push him aside and run after the Indians, who were now crowding toward the big house.

But he did not get far.

Captain Marques was a man accustomed to being obeyed.

He said something in Portuguese to his men, and in a moment Dave found himself flat on his back, struggling with half a dozen stout sailors, while the captain walked off coolly toward the temple.

"I'll see you later on, young fellow!" he called out. "I'll do my best to save your friend!"

There is no sort of doubt that Captain Marques meant this kindly, but Dave was very angry about it, just the same, and he kept on fighting and "said things," which resulted in his being dragged unceremoniously to the Amazonas by the Brazilians, none of whom understood a word of English, or pretended that they did not, which was just the same.

Dave cooled down by the time he got on board the steamer.

He saw that he had made a mistake, and he tried to correct it now that it was too late.

The officers of the Amazonas either could not, or would not, understand him, and they would not allow him to go back on shore.

Meanwhile, wild cries were heard in the direction of the house of the Diamond God.

The officers looked rather disturbed, and Dave could see that they were watching anxiously for the captain's return.

Finding that he could do nothing for Gordon, Dave's thoughts naturally returned to the detective, and by signs he succeeded in making the man whom he took to be the mate understand that he wanted to go down into the cabin.

The mate did not refuse him, but did not go with him. And when he saw the detective lying in the bunk he gave a sharp cry and by his manner showed that he knew the man.

Dave went up to the bunk, determined to wake the detective, in the hope that he would be able to speak in Portuguese, but, to his horror, when he laid his hand upon Percy Howard's forehead he found it cold.

There was no help to be had there.

It looked very much as if the diamond had done its work for the detective.

He was dead, and had evidently been dead for some time.

The greatest excitement followed.

The mate called several of the crew down to see the body.

All seemed to have known Howard, and such a chattering in Portuguese began that Dave was nearly deafened.

While all this was going on a loud shout was suddenly heard on deck, and the mate and all hands made a rush up out of the cabin.

There was trouble on shore for Captain Marques.

They could see him running away from the house of the Diamond God, followed by the Indians, who seemed all of a sudden to have turned enemies instead of friends, for they were throwing spears at him and yelling in the most savage manner.

Of course, the mate and the crew of the Amazonas were immediately thrown into the greatest excitement.

If the chattering had been bad in the cabin, it was worse now. Every man drew a revolver and, leaping ashore, ran to the rescue of their chief.

No attention was paid to Dave, and he ran with the rest, for it seemed to him that if Captain Marques was killed all chance of rescuing Gordon was at an end.

Before they could reach the captain a spear struck him and he fell forward on his face and was in the hands of the Indians in an instant.

Two naked savages carried him away toward the temple, while the rest separated and made a rush to surround the crew, which they very nearly did.

The shots flew in lively style. Several of the Indians went down, but whether wounded or killed Dave had no means of knowing, for when the mate sounded the signal to retreat to the steamer, which he promptly did when he saw that it was too late to do anything to aid his chief, the Indians closed around him and Dave was captured before he knew it.

His revolver was taken from him, and in spite of his struggles he was dragged away toward the house of the Diamond God.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE DIAMOND.

"Hello, young man! Is it you?"

Dave little imagined that the voice of Captain Marques would ever sound so pleasantly to his ears as it did now when this question was put in the darkness of a damp, foul-smelling vault into which the Indians had hurried him after he was captured in front of the house of the Diamond God.

Dave had been tumbled into the vault without ceremony and the door shut and barred against him, and, to tell the truth, after it was all over our young diamond expert was most mightily relieved to find himself alive, and then came that call out of the darkness:

"Hello, young man! Is it you?"

"Well, it is! That you, Captain Marques?" answered Dave.

"It is, what there is left of me," growled the captain.

"Where are you, boy?"

"I don't know. I'm here somewhere. This is a bad job, captain. I thought you were solid with these Indians, but it doesn't look very much that way now."

"Thought so myself," growled the captain, groping his way up to Dave by aid of the wall, "but it's no use to try to play roots on Chief Miguel. I've heard it said before that he was sharp, and now I know just how sharp he really is, and that's a peg too much for me."

"You speak just like a New Yorker," said Dave. "I can hardly believe——"

"That I'm not one? Well, boy, practically I am a New Yorker, although I was born in Brazil, for the best part of my life was spent in your city. But we must talk business. We are in a bad fix, both of us. And the question is, how to get out. Was the steamer captured by the Indians? I couldn't see."

"And I didn't see, either," replied Dave. "They had me down before I knew it; they dragged me into the temple, or whatever you call it, and then down into this hole here."

"Yes, I know," said the captain, "and I suppose you think it is all my fault, but it isn't, quite. Listen to me, boy, and I will tell you a story that will explain some things about this situation that you don't understand."

"What about my friend? I wish you would explain that first," replied Dave.

"I can't tell you anything about him. Is he subject to fits like that?"

"Yes."

"Well, he could not have chosen a worse place to have one in, then. These people are very superstitious. They believe any man who has fits is possessed of a spirit and can be made into a prophet. They have another temple like this up in the mountain and they keep a dozen or more boys and girls up there who all have fits. I haven't the least doubt your friend has been taken there, and, while they won't kill him, he will never get away."

Dave sighed. He would have questioned the captain further, but the man went right on talking.

"How did you fellows get here?" he asked. "Tell me all about it before I begin with what I have to tell you."

Dave told his story then. Although he could not see the captain's face, he knew by his frequent exclamations that he was eagerly listening.

And that man lies dead on my steamer?" he exclaimed, when Dave was through.

"He does."

"Well, well, well! It is strange!"

Not a word had Dave said about the big diamond, but he felt that he was going to hear something about it himself now.

"Listen," said Captain Marques. "Do you know what was in that box you gave me, young man?"

"Diamonds," replied Dave.

"Did you see them?"

"Yes."

"Were they all diamonds?"

"No. One was a piece of glass. That was the big one."

"Ah, ha! You know! That piece of glass came near costing me my life. Listen! That big image you saw is called the Diamond God. These people are rich, although you might not think it. They own this land; they sell rubber; they have got barrels of money. They worship that image and they cover it with diamonds at one of their festivals, which occurs to-day. They carry it up into the mountain temple and back again in solemn procession, and then they heap diamonds upon it in this temple. That is what those small stones are for. I ordered them for Chief Miguel. Strange, isn't it? This is a strange country, though. Listen now and I will tell you something stranger still."

"I am listening," replied Dave. "Go on, captain. This is all mighty interesting to me."

"To get back to the idol," continued the captain; "years ago it used to have a big diamond exactly like the piece of glass you brought me, sticking in its forehead—that was the eye. Chief Miguel's father bought it of a rubber trader, or rather traded for it. How the trader got hold of it I'm sure I don't know, but I have been told that it was stolen from the King of Holland and was known as the Star of the West."

"Exactly," said Dave. "And it was stolen from this temple by the man who now lies dead on your steamer."

"It was?" cried the captain. "How did you know?"

"Never mind. Go on."

"Well, he came here and lived months with the Indians, watching his chance, and finally it came. He stole the diamond and disappeared. He was followed by Miguel's half-brother, a halfbreed named Pedro, who spoke English as well as you or I. Never heard what became of them, but I did hear that Howard was a detective trying to recover the diamond for the King of Holland, and that in some way he lost it, and that he and Pedro went to New York together, both still tracking the stone."

"All true," said Dave; "all true, every word of it."

"How do you know?"

"Finish your story, captain, and then I'll tell mine."

"Well, the end of my story is that I thought I could fool these Indians," continued the captain, "so I got Mr. Lazarus to have the diamond duplicated in glass. Its shape was well known; there are a dozen fac-similes of it in existence. I tried it on. You brought it down to me. To cut my story short, Miguel detected the fraud instantly and—well, here I am. And I rather think they mean to take my life in front of the idol to-day."

"You're cool about it," said Dave.

"Young man, if you had knocked around this hot country as much as I have you would learn to take things cool,"

replied Captain Marques; "but listen. I am not quite through yet. Strange how these things came about. One of those fit-throwing prophets up at the mountain temple prophesied not long ago that the diamond would come back, and it would be brought back by two white boys, one of whom would prove to be a great prophet and, what is odder still, that it would be brought back on this very day. So you see when you two suddenly turned up these stupid fellows made a rush for you, thinking that the prophecy had come true. That was bad enough, but when your partner suddenly went down in a fit it made it a great deal worse. They lugged him off to the temple at once. I told them I had the diamond and—well, it's a wonder they did not kill me on the spot when they discovered my little game; but they still believe in the prophecy. They think that the diamond will actually come back to them to-day, and I have no doubt they have sent up to the mountain temple now to consult their prophets and find out what to do. Why don't you say something, boy? Have you gone to sleep?"

"No," said Dave. "I am only thinking—wondering what it all means."

"Well, well! What do you mean? Of course, you never heard of this diamond until I told you this story."

"I——"

Dave got no further.

At the same instant the door was thrown open and a dozen Indians came trooping into the vault.

Chief Miguel was in the lead, and right behind him came three men carrying blazing torches.

"Come!" he said to Captain Marques. "The Diamond God is waiting for you. He says the diamond is here. Then you must have it. Come! he will decide your fate!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

"I think our fate is pretty well decided now, boy," whispered Captain Marques in Dave's ear as they were led away out of the vault. "I never expect to see the old Amazonas again. I came up to Parano once too often, I'm afraid."

"Wait and see," answered Dave. "I don't give up yet."

Secretly, Dave was lost in amazement at the strange turn affairs had taken.

He knew that he held the key to the situation—not sewed up in his coat-collar, either, but right in his pocket, for while Captain Marques was talking to him Dave had been working in the dark and took the diamond out, so as to have it ready for instant use.

As the dead detective had said more than once, it seemed to be fate from first to last.

It looked as if it were intended that the Star of the West should once more become the eye of the Diamond God.

The torch-bearers ascended a flight of rickety steps which took them up into the temple.

The bare interior of the big inclosure was changed now from the way it had looked when Dave and Gordon first saw it. From one end to the other it was packed with Indians, men, women and children, and all were staring at the great ugly wooden image which the boys had seen carried on the ox-cart in the procession outside. But the big image was no longer decked out with flags.

Instead, a hundred tiny torches blazed about it, being inserted into holes in its bulky body.

Around the neck hung a great string of diamonds in barbarous setting. There were huge diamond earrings suspended from the ears and the breast was studded all over with the glittering stones.

There were no eyes to the image, properly speaking, but in the forehead was a hole, where Dave saw the Star of the West must once have been.

The prisoners were led upon the platform where the idol stood.

Here were several Indians, all old men, and Chief Miguel, who was the living image of the dead Pedro, took his station in front of the idol and made a long address of which Dave could not understand one word.

But Chief Miguel could speak English, too, wherever he had learned it, and he now turned to Captain Marques and said:

"The time has come. The prophecy of the Diamond God must be fulfilled or you must die. You have tried to deceive me. You have given me what is false. There is no help for you. Your men are under guard. Any one who attempts to leave the steamer will be instantly killed. Look! Here is the prophet that our prophets said would come to us, and he tells me that the eye of the Diamond God will be returned to-day."

Chief Miguel clapped his hands and Gordon stepped out from behind the big image, very pale, but perfectly calm.

He gave Dave a meaning look, which was enough to let him know that he had told the chief the truth.

But Captain Marques never suspected.

He threw up his hand and rattled off an appeal for mercy in Portuguese.

"Return the eye of the Diamond God and you shall all leave Peru safely," said the chief, in a dignified way. "The prophets have told us that the eye of our god shall come back to us at the hands of two white boys on this day and at this hour."

"And the prophecy has come true," said Dave, taking the diamond out of his pocket and laying it in the hands of Chief Miguel.

A peculiar smile passed over the old Indian's face.

He did not appear surprised. Hastily examining the stone, he held it up before the crowd and called out something in the native tongue.

A wild shout rang out then which threatened to raise the very roof.

It came again, louder and louder, when Chief Miguel reached up and placed the diamond into the empty socket in the idol's forehead.

"That is where it belongs, and that is where it will stay,"

he said, in English, and he took Gordon's hand and led him up to Dave, saying:

"Boys, I thank you in the name of the Diamond God."

* * * * *

Now this may seem a strange ending to a somewhat singular story, but as the story happens to be founded upon absolute facts we can only state what actually occurred.

From that moment all trouble ended for Dave.

Captain Marques was allowed to return to his steamer, but Dave and Gordon remained that night in the hut of Chief Miguel—not as prisoners, but as his guests, and there was not a man, woman or child in the tribe who did not visit them and bring them a present of some kind.

The thanks of the Diamond God proved to be rather valuable.

Chief Miguel was a very intelligent man. And he turned out to be a liberal one as well, for when the boys sailed away on the Amazonas next morning they carried with them Brazilian gold equal to five thousand dollars of American money.

Of course, this was nothing like what the diamond was worth, but it was a very substantial reward.

Strange things happen in these wild countries, and it was certainly very strange that circumstances should have so shaped themselves as to make the prophecy come true, but such indeed was the case.

Detective Howard was buried at sea at Dave's request, for he felt that the man's body would not be safe from insult if its presence on the steamer became known.

Captain Marques had a great many questions to ask, of course; in fact, he was not through asking and wondering when the Amazonas reached Para.

Here Dave and Gordon parted company.

Dave went down into the diamond country and was very successful in his purchases for Lazarus & Wertheimer.

Gordon shipped on a Liverpool rubber steamer and went home.

In due time Dave returned to New York and the firm were so much pleased with his work that they sent him to Brazil several times, and later to South Africa.

To-day Dave is a member of this big diamond house and rapidly advancing on the road to fortune.

So to one person at least the Star of the West brought good luck, for the foundation of Dave's life success was laid when he first saw the big diamond in the hands of the boy who came from Brazil.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY MAYOR; OR, BUILDING UP A TOWN." By Richard R. Montgomery.

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MISERY ISLAND.

By John Sherman.

"All hands aloft there, lively! Clew up the foretops! Brace the mainyard! Lively! Lively!"

Thus the trumpet-like orders flew thick and fast from the lips of Commodore Haines, of the U. S. S. Sumner, six hundred miles off the South American coast.

A storm was coming, a regular typhoon, peculiar to those tropical seas, and which was capable of doing much damage unless the ship were put under bare poles in the quickest possible way.

So the sailors went aloft like monkeys, and worked like beavers. The Sumner spread a tremendous amount of canvas, however, and every inch was set, so that it required quick work on the part of the crew to obey the orders of the captain.

The Sumner was one of the old type of frigates, and had seen her best days, being, in fact, a fit subject for condemnation.

She carried forty-four guns which had barked lustily in the War of 1812. Small wonder, then, that when the deadly typhoon struck her she went over on her beam ends, while a tremendous sea swept completely over her. Officers and men were swept overboard like puppets.

With that first tremendous onslaught over, the old ship tried to right herself, but all her heavy guns had broken loose, and crashing to port, held her listed there.

Rolling in the trough of the sea, she soon opened a seam, and the surviving members of the crew realized that the fighting and cruising days of the Sumner were over.

The storm was over almost as quickly as it had come, but the old ship could not last much longer.

Lashed to the lee rail were two young middies. Their faces were blanched, and their teeth chattered at the prospect before them.

"My heavens, Joe!" gasped one of them. "This is the last of the old Sumner! Are we the only ones left of the crew?"

So for a moment it seemed, but the exclamation had been heard by a third midddy, Hal Porter by name, who had escaped the fury of the waves by lashing himself to one of the masts.

"Oh, no, Ralph Shaw!" he cried, cheerily. "I'm alive and kicking, yet. But it seems as if you and I and Joe Emerson were the only ones to answer to the call to quarters."

"Not much!" cried Joe, as he released himself from the ropes that held him. "There is Denny Halpin, as I live!"

A man was crawling from beneath a pile of wreckage on the deck. He was one of the seamen, and was a stout fellow, with a fringe of whiskers under his chin.

Two more men showed up, Ben Hollis and Dan Hall, the ship's carpenter and boatswain, respectively. Out of the whole complement of one hundred and twenty men on board the Sumner before the typhoon struck her, only these six were left. It seemed hardly credible.

White faced and terror-struck they all stood silently on the slanted deck of the sinking ship. The full horrors of their position were dawning upon them one and all.

About as far as the eye could reach was one vast boundless expanse of water. They were in a part of the South Pacific frequented but little by ships.

Ralph Shaw, the young midddy, was the first to arouse and in tones of alarm cried:

"Come, this will not do, boys. We will go to the bottom with the old hulk. Life is dear to all of us. We must save ourselves."

The others looked blankly at each other.

"That is all right, shipmate," cried Dan Hall, the bo'sun, despairingly. "But how are we goin' to do that? Can you make the reckoning?"

"Why, we've got to cut adrift from the ship," cried Ralph, impatiently.

"Yes, but how?"

"Why, take the long boat."

"It is stove."

"Then make a raft."

"A raft!"

Instantly the hope was revived in the breasts of all. Life was dear and nothing must be left undone to save it.

With the inspiration most supreme in their breasts they set to work. In an incredible short space of time, with the ship carpenter's help, they had constructed a large raft capable of supporting all of them.

Provisions were placed aboard the raft and then all clambered on to it. They were none too soon, for scarcely fifty yards from it the Sumner went down.

Adrift in the vast waste of water upon a frail raft. Such was the position of the six survivors of the ill-fated frigate.

We will not dwell upon the weary days and weeks of aimless drifting upon the raft. Fortunately they encountered no gale.

But a fearful peril now presented itself. They had exhausted their stores of provisions and hunger was gnawing at their vitals. The desperate horrors of starvation were upon them.

In this fearful state, an idea one day suggested itself to Joe Emerson.

For a week a number of ravenous sharks had followed the raft. Joe was watching them when the idea occurred to him.

A shark will always turn upon its back and rise to the surface for its prey. Joe suggested that one of the company throw himself over the edge of the raft and tempt the sharks to make a grab for him, and then get back on the raft, while the others would stand by to help him on board again and kill the shark if he came near enough.

Shark meat is not the worst kind of food. At any rate, in their present predicament the castaways could not afford to be fastidious.

The plan was hailed with enthusiasm.

Hal Porter was to steer the raft, and keep it steady. Joe and Ralph were to hold Dan Hall over the edge of the raft, while the other two men, with knife and ax, were to remain upon either side, in readiness to strike the monsters when they should rise.

The scheme worked to perfection.

Two of the sharks made a dive for Dan in the water. Joe and Ralph, with all their strength, pulled the bo'sun out of the way just in time. The ravenous monsters rose out of the water entirely, and as their shovel-shaped noses

came up, Denny and Ben gave them fierce blows with knife and ax.

There was a tremendous commotion in the water, and the waves were red with blood.

Hal sculled the raft nearer to the dying fish, and soon they turned belly upward on the water.

But they had hardly towed the dead sharks alongside when a wild cry escaped from Joe.

"Look! look!" he cried, excitedly. "There is land! Saved! saved!"

A wild cheer burst from the lips of the castaways. Sure enough, there was a long strip of sand, nearly a mile long, and perhaps twenty feet in height above the sea-level. Not a sign of vegetation of any kind could be seen, nor life of any kind.

It was nothing but a mighty sandbar, an islet of desolation right in the midst of the mighty waste of waters.

There seemed to be a strong current which bore the raft swiftly down upon the islet.

In a few moments the raft had grounded upon the white sand.

Joe was the first to spring ashore. For some time nobody could speak.

"Well, this does beat me!" cried Ralph, finally. "Did you ever see anything like this, shipmates? This is not on any chart."

"But it ought to be," vowed Joe. "Supposing some ship should run around here——"

"No danger of that, shipmates," put in Dan Hall. "If ever a ship comes this way in ten years, we can consider ourselves in luck."

The spirits of all took a decided drop as they realized what a barren place it was. To be sure, it was more of a certainty than the raft, but scarcely safer in time of storm, for it was more than likely that a high sea would sweep over the island.

However, there was nothing to do but to make the best of it.

"I tell you what," said Joe, "we can camp here for a day or two, and then, if we choose, resort again to the raft."

This met with the approval of all, and they set to work to make themselves comfortable. Enough canvas was on board the raft to make a tent, and they had the shark meat for food, but it could not be cooked, for there was no fuel with which to make a fire.

Two days the castaways remained upon the island before making a move. Then it was decided to trust to the raft again and the ocean currents.

"We shall starve if we remain on this miserable island," declared Joe Emerson. "We may as well starve aboard the raft."

They tried to launch the raft, but every time it was pushed away from the island it would be hurled back by a powerful current. No matter from what quarter they started, the strange current would bring them back to the starting point.

Undoubtedly an undertow swirled about the island of sand, and probably was the reason for its existence.

Certain it was that no means of propulsion they could devise could keep the raft from drifting back upon the island.

Two days were consumed in the ineffectual struggle, and then, worn out with their labors, the castaways threw themselves upon the sand to sleep.

Now that it became impossible to leave the island, fresh horrors crowded upon them.

The shark meat soon putrefied, rendering it unfit for food. There was absolutely nothing of an eatable nature on the island, not even shellfish.

The situation was a desperate one, and the outlook for the future was gloomy indeed.

A week passed, and then the horror of their position crowded upon them.

The days were sultry, and almost unbearable, and the nights damp. The castaways crept about the little island with staggering steps and emaciated forms, vainly searching the horizon for a sail.

Misery Island was the name they gave it, which it well deserved.

To add to their troubles, Ben Hollis, Dan Hall and Denny Halpin were stricken with a fatal disease, and in a few hours were dead.

While nursing Halpin, Hal Porter fell sick. Two days later Joe Emerson and Ralph Shaw were the only ones left.

The two survivors buried the bodies of their unfortunate comrades, with hearts filled with gloomy forebodings.

A few days later, while Joe was on the highest ridge of the island, looking for a sail, his heel struck something metallic in the sand, and glancing down he saw the outline of an iron-bound chest. Shouting to Ralph, a spade was brought, and the chest dug out, as well as five others buried beside it. Opening one, it was found to be filled to the brim with gold coin.

"What a fortune this would be to us if we were home, Ralph?"

"Yes," replied his friend, "but how valueless here. I would give it all for a square meal."

Joe turned to his friend with a strange expression on his haggard face.

"Ralph, if one gives up his life now, the other may live to be rescued," said he. "I am willing to sacrifice my life if the goddess of chance so wills it. Are you willing to draw lots, the loser to die that the fortunate one may live?"

Ralph hesitated for a moment. The idea of feasting upon his comrade's body was not so repugnant in the insanity of his suffering, but he could never take his life.

"Yes, we will settle it that way, the loser to plunge the knife into his own body."

Joe won. Ralph lifted the knife for the fatal blow, but with a gasping cry, Joe seized his arm.

"Stop! We are saved! A sail! A sail!"

Their signals of distress were seen, and for the first time in many years a ship hove to off Misery Island. The two castaways were taken off, together with the treasure, and in due time arrived home to gladden the hearts of the dear ones waiting for them.

The chests of gold netted them a snug fortune, which insured them a competence and a happy life thereafter, but they will never forget those awful days on Misery Island.

ITCH POWDER.



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 10 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nicked brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. SENARENS, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

X-RAY WONDER



This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE SWIMMING FISH



Here is a fine mechanical toy. It is an imitation goldfish, about 4 1/2 inches long, and contains a water-tight compartment which will not allow it to sink. To keep it in a natural position, the lower fin is ballasted with lead. To make it work, a spring is wound up. You then throw it in the water, and the machinery inside causes the tail to wiggle, and propel it in the most lifelike manner. When it runs down the fish floats until it is recovered, and it can then be rewound. Races between two of these fishes are very interesting. Price, 25 cents each by mail, postpaid.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.

LAUGHABLE EGG TRICK



This is the funniest trick ever exhibited and always produces roars of laughter. The performer says to the audience that he requires some eggs for one of his experiments. As no spectator carries any, he calls his assistant, taps him on top of the head, he gags, and an egg comes out of his mouth. This is repeated until six eggs are produced. It is an easy trick to perform, once you know how, and always makes a hit. Directions given for working it. Price, 25 cents by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CARTER AEROPLANE No. 1.



Will fly on a horizontal line 150 feet! Can be flown in the house, and will not injure itself nor anything in the room. The most perfect little aeroplane made. The motive power is furnished by twisted rubber bands contained within the tubular body of the machine. It is actuated by a propeller at each end revolving in opposite directions. Variation in height may be obtained by moving the planes and the balance weight. It can be made to fly either to the right or the left by moving the balance side-wise before it is released for flight. Price, 35c. each, delivered.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is rifled, sighted and tested for accuracy by expert gunsmiths. It shoots as you hold. The simple, improved safety device on every Remington-UMC .22 repeater never fails to work. Accidental discharge is impossible.

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The action handles .22 short, .22 long or .22 long rifle cartridges—any or all at the same time without adjustment.

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I Cured My Daughter. Doctors gave her up. Will send Free express paid; give Express Office. F. F. LEPSO, Milwaukee, Wis.

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& HAY FEVER REMEDY sent by express to you on Free Trial. If it cures send \$1; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. NATIONAL CHEMICAL CO., 437 Poplar St., Sidney, Ohio



WEIRD & NOBBY 15c
This Skull & Crossbones Ring. All ver finish; flashing red or green eyes. Looks well, wears well and pleases. Draws attention everywhere. Price only 15c or 2 for 25c; worth more. Wholesale: 12 for \$1.00. Big seller. W. E. HILLPOT, Frenchtown, N. J.

LOTS OF FUN FOR A DIME

Ventriloquists Double Throat. Plus roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary and imitate birds and beasts of field and forest. **LOADS OF FUN.** Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price only 10 cents; 4 for 25 cents or 12 for 50 cents. DOUBLE THROAT CO. DEPT. K FRENCHTOWN, N. J.

Wizard Repeating LIQUID PISTOL



Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury. Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger. Loads from any Liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Money order or U. S. stamps. No coins.

PARKER, STEARNS & CO., 273 GEORGIA AVE., BROOKLYN, N. Y.



GLASS PEN.—Patent glass pen, with nice dip, writes like any ordinary pen; each put up in wooden box. Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

IMITATION GIANT DIAMONDS.



Diamond rings or studs of half-inch and one inch in diameter are heard of in stories only. We have them imitated by prodigious sparkling stones which will deceive the glance of any spectator. Price by mail, postpaid, small size, 25c. each; large size, 35c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE MAGIC WALLET

Lots of fun can be had with it, puzzling people, while being used in a practical way to carry bank bills, letters, invoices, etc. Open with the straight bands on the left, lay a bill on top of bands, close wallet; open to the left, and the bill will be found under the crossed bands. Close wallet, open to the right, and the bill will be found under straight bands. How did it get there? That's the question. Price, 12 cents each, postpaid.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS



Something entirely new, consisting of six large cones, each one nearly one inch in height. Upon lighting one of these cones with a match, you see something similar to a 4th of July exhibition of fireworks. Sparks fly in every direction, and as the cone burns down it throws out and is surrounded with what appears to be grass; at the same time a large snake uncoils himself from the burning cone and lazily stretches out in the grass, which at last burns to ashes but the snake remains as a curiosity unharmed. They are not at all dangerous and can be set off in the parlor if placed on some metal surface that will not burn. An ordinary dust pan answers the purpose nicely. Price of the six cones, packed in sawdust, in a strong wooden box, only 10c., 3 boxes for 25c., 1 dozen boxes 75c., sent by mail postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPH



A useful, instructive and amusing outfit. It consists of two telegraph instruments, one for each station. The stations must be within hearing distance of each other. A Morse code or alphabet goes with each set, and, once it is mastered, you can operate any telegraph instrument, and command a good salary. With our system you can send messages to your friend at quite a distance, and receive his reply. Price, 15 cents by mail, postpaid.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.

HINDOO FLOWER-POT TRICK



With this trick you can make a plant grow right up in a flower-pot, before the eyes of your audience. An ordinary empty earthen flower-pot is handed to the spectators for examination. A handkerchief is then placed over it, and you repeat a few magic words, and wave your wand over it. When the handkerchief is removed there is a beautiful plant, apparently in full bloom, in the pot. Full directions with each outfit. Price, 15 cents by mail, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

LOOK BACKWARD.



The greatest novelty out. Enjoy yourself! Own one! When placed to the eye, you can see what is taking place in back and front of you at the same time. No need to wish for eyes in the back of your head, as with this article you can observe all that occurs in that direction without even turning your head. How often are you anxious to see faces in back of you or observe who is following without attracting attention by turning around. This instrument does the trick for you. Lots of fun in owning a Seebach Scope. Price, 15c. each, in money or postage stamps.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

FIFFL



fly six inches wide.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

Also known as a Japanese butterfly. A pleasing novelty enclosed in an envelope. When the envelope is opened Fiff will fly out through the air for several yards. Made of colored paper to represent a butterfly.

Price, 10c.

VANISHING CIGAR.



This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

JAPANESE TWIRLER.



A wonderful imported paper novelty. By a simple manipulation of the wooden handles a number of beautiful figures can be produced. It takes on several combinations of magnificent colors.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SPRING TOPS



Something new for the boys. A top you can spin without a string. This is a decided novelty. It is of large size, made of brass, and has a heavy balance rim. The shank contains a powerful spring and has an outer casing. The top of the shank has a milled edge for winding it up. When wound, you merely lift the outer casing, and the top spins at such a rapid speed that the balance rim keeps it going a long time. Without doubt the handsomest and best top on the market.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LITTLE ACCORDEONS



The smallest, cheapest, and best sounding musical instrument for the price. This perfect little accordion has four keys and eight notes, a complete scale, upon which you can play almost any tune. It is about 5 x 2 1/2 inches in size, and is not a toy, but a practical and serviceable accordion in every respect; with ordinary care it will last for years, and produces sweet music and perfect harmony. Anyone can learn to play it with very little practice.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE NEW FROG JOKER.



Bushels of fun! "Froggy" has got a very croaking and rasping voice, and when held in the hollow of the hand and made to croak, one instinctively looks around for a bullfrog. An amusing joke can be played on your friends by passing the ratchet-wheel of the frog down their coat-sleeve or the back of their coat. The ripping, tearing noise gives them a severe shock, and they heave a sigh of relief when they find that their clothes are sound and whole as before. A good joke is to make a gentleman's or lady's watch a stem winder. With the frog concealed in your hand, you take the stem of the watch between your thumb and finger, and at the same time allow the ball of your thumb to pass over the ratchet-wheel of the frog, when to the company you will seem to be winding the watch, but the noise will startle them, for 'twill sound more like winding Barnum's steam callopes than a watch, and you can keep winding indefinitely. The possessor of one of these Frog Jokers can have any amount of fun with it. It is made of bronze metal and will never wear out. Do not fail to send for one. Price, 10c., 3 for 25c. by mail, post-paid; one dozen by express, 75c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

Ayvad's Water-Wings



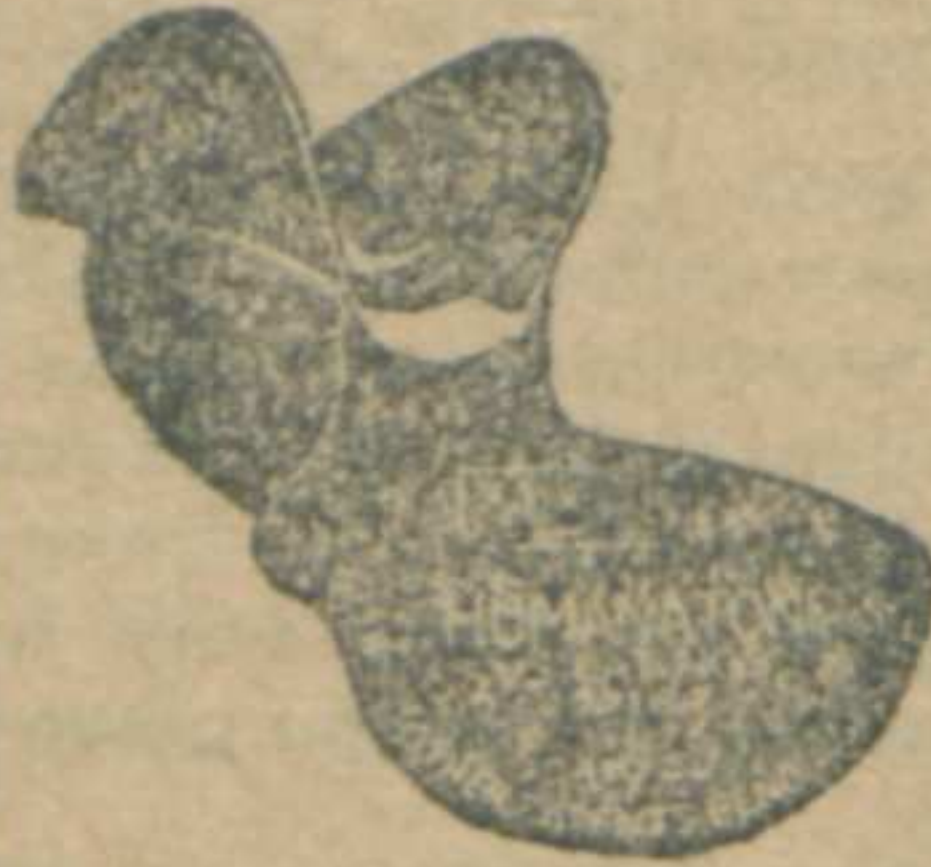
Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

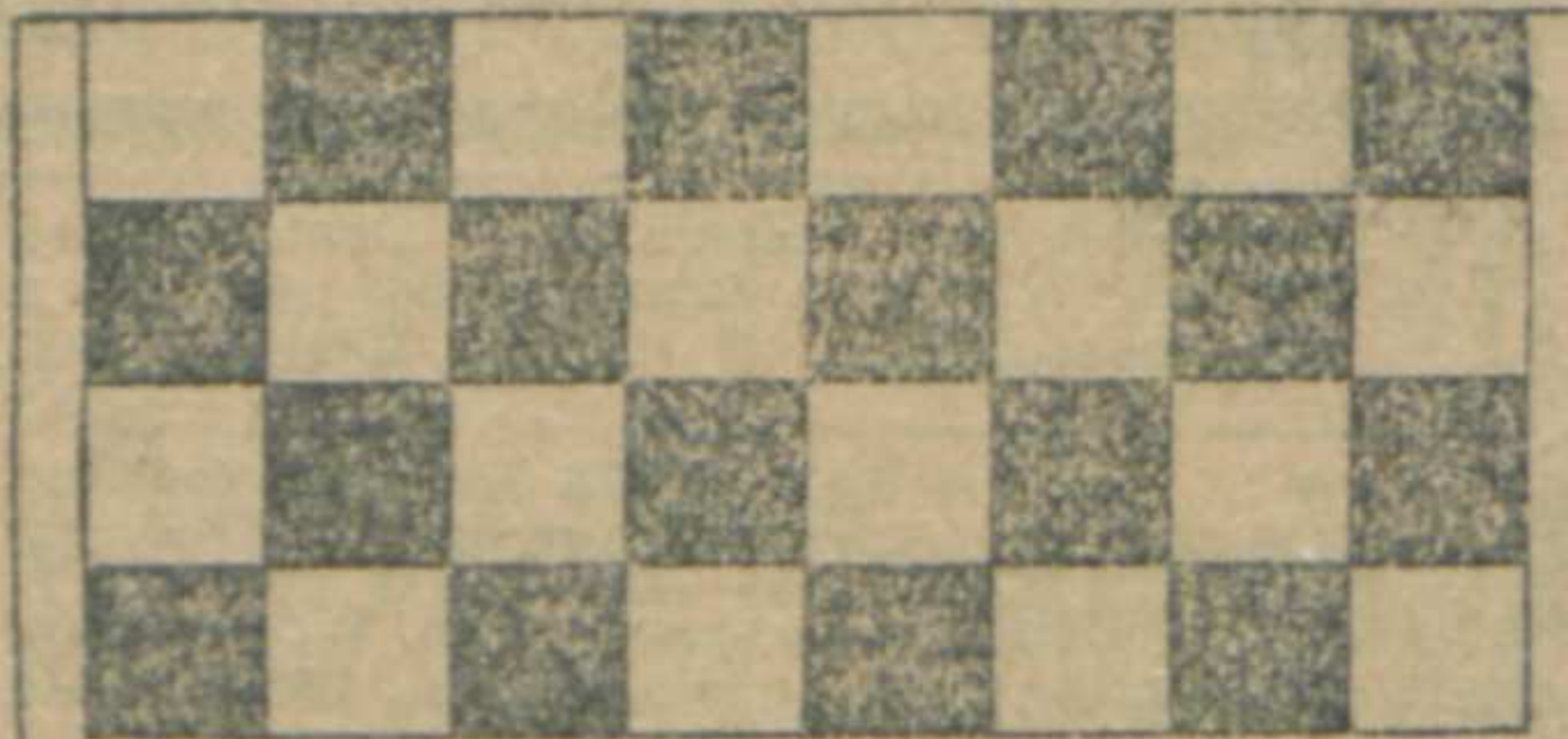
HUMANATONE.



The Improved Humanatone. This flute will be found to be the most enjoyable article ever offered; nickel plated, finely polished; each put up in a box with full instruction how to use them. Price, 18c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

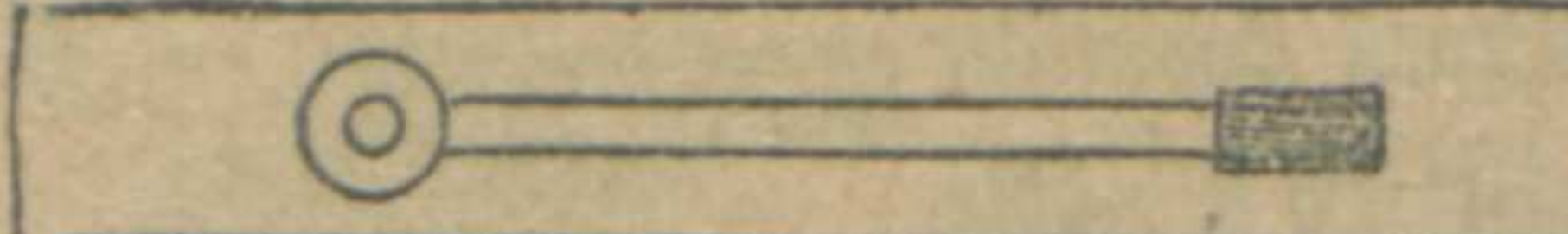
LITTLE CHECKER BOARDS.



Price 7 cents each by mail. They are made of durable colored cardboard, fold to the size of 6 1/2 x 3 1/4 inches, and are so handy in size that they can be carried in the pocket. They contain 24 red and black checkers, and are just as serviceable as the most expensive boards made. The box and lid can be fastened together in a moment by means of patent joints in the ends. Full directions printed on each box.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DOUBLE CLAPPERS



They are handsomely made of white wood, 6 inches long, with carefully rounded edges. On each side a steel spring is secured, with flat leaden discs at the ends. They produce a tremendous clatter, and yet they can be played even better than the most expensive bones used by minstrels. The finest article of its kind on the market. Price 7 cents a pair, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

THE FLUTTER-BY.



This mechanical flying machine is worked by a new principle. It looks like a beautiful butterfly, about 9 inches wide. In action its wing movements are exactly like those of a live butterfly. It will travel through the air about 25 feet, in the most natural manner. As flying toys are all the rage, this one should be a source of profit and amusement to both old and young. Price, 15c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.



A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the neatest and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

LITTLE RIP'S TEN-PINS.



In each set there are ten pins and two bowling balls, packed in a beautifully ornamented box. With one of these miniature sets you can play ten-pins on your dining-room table just as well as the game can be played in a regular alley. Every game known to professional bowlers can be worked with these pins. Price, 10c. per box by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

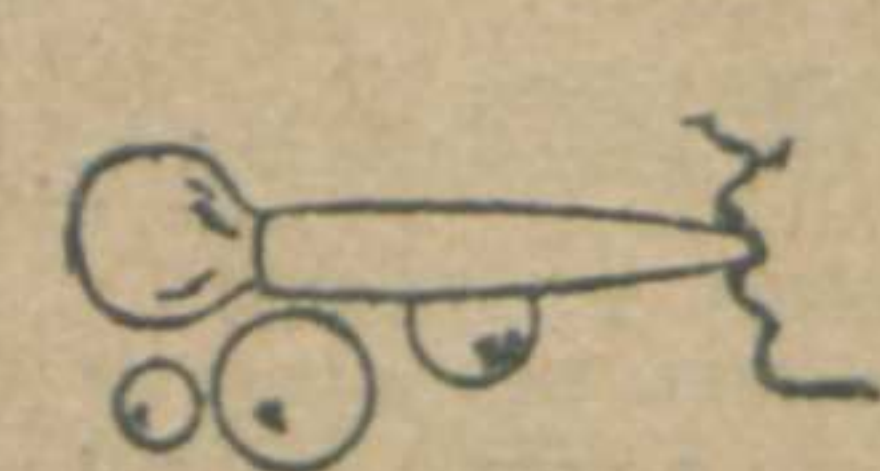
FIGHTERS.



A brand new idea for amusement. They consist of small cardboard figures of soldiers, Indians, swordsmen, etc., and are mounted on wires. The moment you twist the wires between the little figures, they instantly become animated, and charge at each other in the most astonishing manner. No end of fun with these toys. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

BUBBLE BLOWER.



With this device, a continuous series of bubbles can be blown. It is a wooden, cigar-shaped blower, enclosing a small vial, in which there is a piece of soap. The vial is filled with water, and a peculiarly perforated cork is inserted. When you blow in to the mouthpiece, it sets up a hydraulic pressure through the cork perforations and causes bubble after bubble to come out. No need of dipping into water once the little bottle is filled. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

J. KENNEDY, 56 Sedgwick Av., Yonkers, N. Y.

HALF MASKS.



False-faces beaten a mile! There are 7 in a set and represent an Indian, a Japanese girl, a clown, Foxy Grandpa, an English Johnny Atkins and an Automobile. Beautifully lithographed in handsome colors on a durable quality of cardboard. They have eyeholes and string perforations. Price, 6c. each, or the full set of 7 for 25c., postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MYSTIC PUZZLE



The newest and most novel puzzle on the market. It consists of a flat piece of wood 1 1/2 x 3 inches, neatly covered with imitation leather. The cross-bar and ring in the hole are nickel-plated. The object is to get the small ring off the bar. It absolutely cannot be done by anyone not in the secret. More fun to be had with it than with any other puzzle made. It is not breakable and can be carried in the vest pocket.

Price 10 cents each by mail, post-paid

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TABLE RAISING TRICK



The most mystifying trick ever done by a magician. The performer shows a plain light table. He places his hand flat upon its top. The table clings to his hand as if glued there. He may swing it in the air, but the table will not leave his hand until he sets it on the floor again. The table can be inspected to show that there are no strings or wires attached.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MUSICAL SEAT



The best joke out. You can have more fun than a circus, with one of these novelties. All you have to do is to place one on a chair seat (hidden under a cushion, if possible). Then tell your friend to sit down. An unearthly shriek from the little round drum will send your victim up in the air, the most puzzled and astonished mortal on earth. Don't miss getting one of these genuine laugh producers. Perfectly harmless, and never misses doing its work.

Price 20 cents each, by mail, post-paid

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 23, 1912.

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BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

A chemist has made the discovery that California roses contain twenty per cent. more perfume than those grown elsewhere.

The names of street car lines are usually a source of perplexity to new arrivals in a city, and the confusion is often increased rather than mitigated by the signs on the cars. A consular report from Amsterdam tells us that in that city the convenient plan has been adopted of giving each car line a number. This number is suspended between the arms of the trolley pole on each car, and is visible several hundred yards away. The numbers are always referred to in directing inquirers. Most German cities have a similar system, which works very successfully.

The English newspapers print a report from Madrid to the effect that some ledgers discovered at Palos, Spain, contain interesting information on the cost of discovering America by Columbus. The sum total for which America was discovered amounted to \$7,000, or 38,000 pesetas. This was distributed as follows: 14,000 pesetas for armament, 2,000 pesetas for personal expenses of Columbus and his officers and crew, 22,000 for general expenses during the eight months for which the voyage lasted. The sum of \$7,000 in 1492 represented \$70,000 in 1912.

Because of the narrow streets in several parts of the city of London it has been found impossible to use the ordinary motor omnibus on account of its comparative length and the attending difficulties of turning the bus around at the end of a trip. Some of the routes laid out for the motor buses are circular, thereby obviating the necessity for making complete turns. On some occasions it has been found impossible to map out circular routes, and a new type of bus is being tried out, which is reversible, the same as a trolley car. It can be steered from either end, conductor and driver simply changing places.

Horns of the Rocky Mountain sheep, the buffalo and the mountain goat are made into dishes, ladles and spoons. Some of these are carved, while others are both carved and inlaid with shell. The decoration is sometimes geometric, but often a conventional representation of animal

forms. This is especially true of the spoons of the Indians on the coast of northern British Columbia and southern Alaska. A few of these spoons are so large, so wonderfully artistic, and so well made from the horn of the rare Rocky Mountain sheep that even a moderately good one may appropriately be called a "great horn spoon." These are of a rich, golden yellow color. By far the greater number of horn spoons in this same region are made of the horn of the mountain goat, and these are black. A few have black handles of goat horn and golden bowls of sheep horn. All these handles are usually carved to represent traditional or mythical men, animals or monsters belonging to the lore of the individual family, just as among our people silver spoons bear the family monogram.

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OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"Dad, what sort of a bureau is a matrimonial bureau?"
"Oh, any bureau that has five drawers full of women's fixings and one man's tie in it."

"I visited a spiritualistic medium the other day." "Did she tell you anything that was true?" "Yes, one thing in particular—that I spent my money foolishly."

"I believe Mr. Blank will propose to our Edith tonight." "What makes you think that?" "I noticed when he came in he had a sort of desperate look."

"Is your chauffeur an expert?" "Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Chuggins. "He can explain in a most interesting way exactly why the car isn't running most of the time."

Mr. Dorkins—Maria, why do you always interrupt me as soon as I begin to— Mrs. Dorkins—Because I always know exactly what you are going to say. What's the use of my wasting time by waiting to hear you finish?

It was a faithful Swede girl who, when the winter was coldest and the furnace was not working right, was admonished by the mistress to take an iron to bed with her to warm it. In the morning the kindly woman asked Lena how it worked. "Pritty gude," she said. "Ah had it almost warm by morning."

She was a bright girl, and her escort, who was also her intended, was delighted to find how quickly she grasped the points of the game. She got on so well that he ventured a light witticism on the subject. "Baseball reminds me of the household," he remarked. "There's the plate, the batter, the fowls, the flies, etc." "And it reminds me of marriage," she retorted. "First the diamond, when they are engaged, then the struggles and the hits, then the men going out, and finally, the difficulty they have in getting home." And he sat and thought.

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